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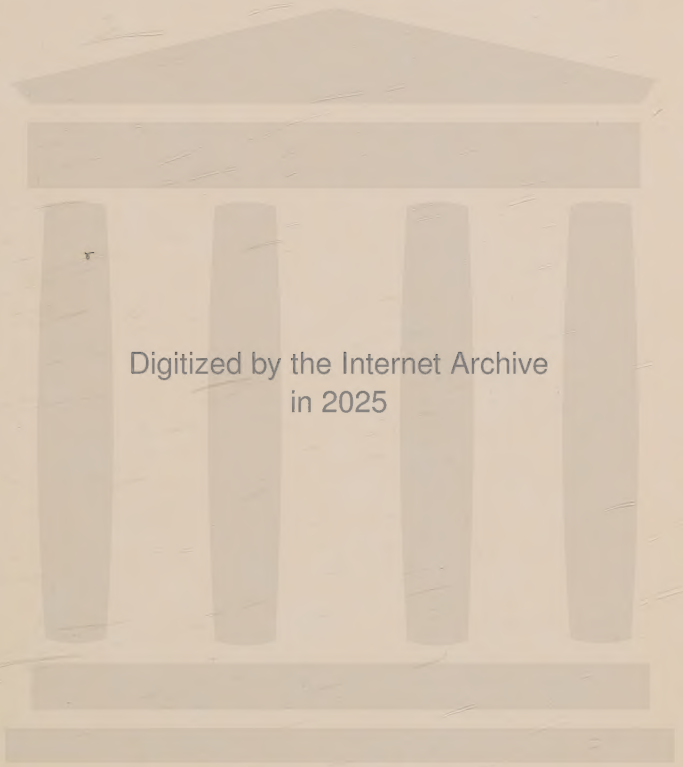

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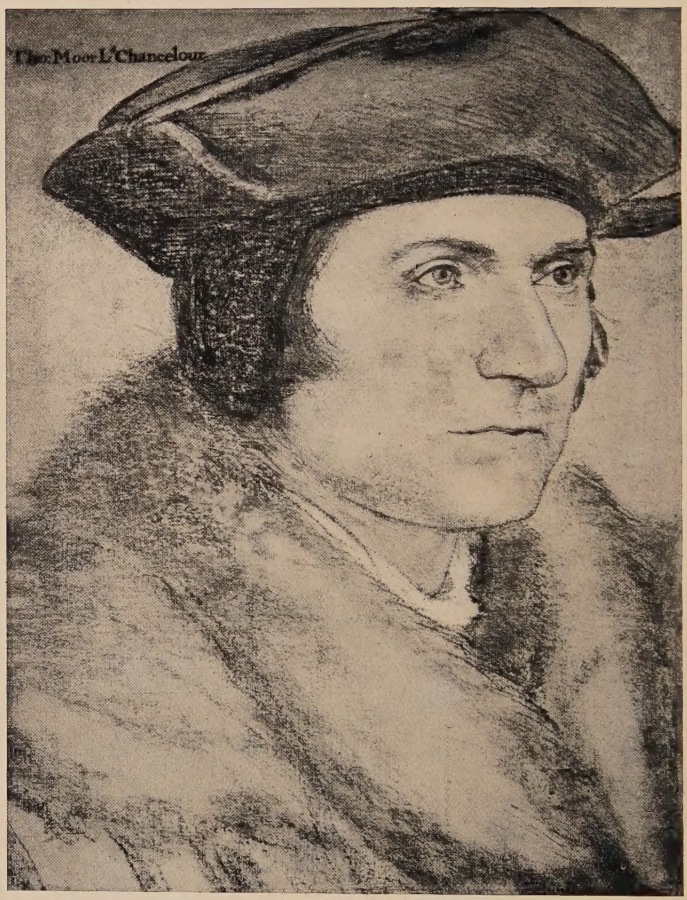

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SIR THOMAS MORE

Holbein's famous drawing of a great and noble man, who loved the truth, and yet was forced into opposition to it.

THE ENGLISH BIBLE & ITS STORY

ITS GROWTH, ITS TRANSLATORS & THEIR ADVENTURES

BY

JAMES BAIKIE, D.D., F.R.A.S.

AUTHOR OF
"THE GLAMOUR OF NEAR EAST EXCAVATION,"
"THE STORY OF THE PHARAOHS,"
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Preface

IN the accompanying chapters, my aim has been to present to the general reader a simple and straightforward account of the growth of the English Bible, from the earliest days of Christianity in England to the present time, together with the story of some of the scholars, saints, and martyrs who have been mainly instrumental in giving a vernacular Bible to the English-speaking races. While the point of view from which the book is written is frankly Protestant, I have endeavoured throughout to avoid a merely partisan presentation of the facts, and to give credit where it is due to the men who, like Erasmus, found themselves unable to go all the way with the Reformers, as well as to the merits of such champions of the Roman Church as the translators of the Rheims and Douai version.

Among the many authorities on whose researches my account is based, I owe perhaps the deepest debt to Bishop Westcott, Dr. W. F. Moulton, and Mr. A. W. Pollard; but there are many other writers, to whom, though I can only make a general acknowledgment of their help, I owe information on many points. In the scheme of illustration, the Reformation period may seem to bulk unduly. This is due, of course, to the fact that for no other period have we anything comparable with the priceless series of portraits which Holbein has left us of the English men and women of this time. Where it has been possible, however, the work of

such artists as Harvey and Hayter has been drawn upon for pictures which are more strictly speaking imaginative.

The book is sent forth with the hope and prayer that it may interest at least some of its readers in the wonderful history of the greatest spiritual and literary treasure which our race possesses.

JAMES BAIKIE.

Introduction

IT is a most singular and remarkable fact that among all the links which bind together the scattered branches of the English-speaking race, one of the very strongest is their common possession of a book of which not a single line was written, or a single thought conceived, by an Englishman. English literature is indeed rich in great writers whose works have had a profound influence in determining and maintaining the intellectual and spiritual unity of the race; but even the stoutest admirers of Shakespere, Milton, Bunyan, Wordsworth, Scott, and Tennyson would cheerfully and ungrudgingly admit that the works of all these put together are not for one moment to be compared, as an influence, with the power which the English Bible has exercised as an agent of that unity, and, scarcely less, as its most conspicuous monument and sign. The Bible goes into regions where our greatest writers are never heard of, and penetrates social strata which are never reached by their influence; its habits of thought, its outlooks, its very turns of phraseology have saturated the English mind; its ethical standards have formed, to no small extent, the racial conscience; its ideals have determined, in large measure, the racial conception of the destiny of humanity. Such a phenomenon is otherwise absolutely without a parallel, and is all the more astonishing because the conceptions and ideals thus accepted and assimilated are those of a race not only alien from, but singularly antipathetic to the average Anglo-Saxon.

To no other race in the world, it may safely be said, has this alien book made such an appeal as to our own. The Mediterranean peoples of Greece and Italy, through whom it

was first transmitted to Europe in general, might have been expected to have been possessed and inspired by it in even greater degree than our own race, as having received the first impact of its fresh and original message. In point of fact, the exact opposite has been the case. The position of the Bible among the Southern Europeans, and especially among the Latin races, has, from a very early period of the history of Christianity, been fundamentally an inferior one, because other aspects of religion have asserted themselves at the expense of the written word, and ceremonial and sacramental acts have ousted Holy Scripture from the place of honour.

This is not the place to attempt any discussion of the age-long controversy as to the relative position of Ceremonial and the Word in Divine Worship, and in human life; nor is any attempt made to pronounce any judgment on the respective merits of the conflicting ideals; it is sufficient to point out, as has been done, the simple and unchallengeable fact. The only other European stock whose position towards the Bible has been more or less akin to our own is that German race which is also racially akin to us; and even in this case, though the literary and critical study of the book has been characteristically intense, its penetration of common life has scarcely been of the same intimate and universal quality as with ourselves. To say this is not, of course, to claim for the English-speaking race that its conduct has always been guided and controlled by the ideals of the book which it has held in such esteem; the gap between the ideal and actual has always been sufficiently conspicuous in the story of our own race, as in that of others; but simply that the Bible has been the standard and norm of life and conduct among our people, however far our practice may have declined below it. The English race is emphatically "The People of the Book"—and that Book an alien one.

How did such a phenomenon, unique in the history of the world, come to be? The answer to that question can only be found by tracing the history of the English Bible, and seeing how, as an *English* Bible, it grew up with the English

People, and how its various developments correspond with various vital aspects of the historical development of the race. The growth of the Book, in its English dress, and the growth of the People are inextricably intertwined, and mutually dependent. One purpose of this book is to trace the outline of this common development, with its interactions.

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BOOK ONE

THE BIBLE BEFORE ITS COMING TO ENGLAND

CHAPTER ONE

The Substance of the Book

OUR first task with regard to this alien book, which has had so remarkable an influence upon our race, is to attempt to form a clear idea of what it really is, how it was compiled, when its various parts were gathered together, how and when its limits were determined, and, not least important, how it was written and preserved—all points on which we are not all by any means so clear as we might be. The fact that we have to use the word "compiled," rather than "composed," brings before us at once the outstanding characteristic of the book—that it is not, in point of fact, really a book at all, but rather almost a national literature. Of the two sections of which it is composed, the earlier—known as the Old Testament—is really the national literature of the Hebrew race, gradually collected together, in various groups of writings, during a period of several centuries, and assuming its final form at a period not later than 100 B.C. The later section—the New Testament—while actually the final flower and fruit of one of the root conceptions of its predecessor, is distinguished from the latter most manifestly by the fact that its primary appeal is world-wide, instead of national.

The contents of the Old Testament, then, are very varied, embracing History and Legend, Codes regulating Public

and Ceremonial Law, Poetry, almost entirely of a sacred type, a certain amount of that Wisdom or Proverbial teaching so characteristic of the ancient world, some very remarkable examples of Parable, a considerable amount of Moral teaching of a very high order, combined, at times, with a certain amount of predictive utterance, and a highly imaginative and visionary element. With the perpetually changing position as to when these various groups of writings took their present shape, we are, fortunately, not concerned. What we have to do with is the undoubted fact that the Hebrews grouped their sacred books in three great divisions, The Law, the Prophets, and the *Hagiographa*, or Sacred Writings. The Law included the five books attributed to Moses, which we know as the Pentateuch. The Prophets included (strangely enough to our minds), Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Kings, which were known as "the Former Prophets"; and Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve Minor Prophets (so-called), which were known as "the Later Prophets." The Hagiographa included the Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles, 1 and 2. What principles, if any, guided this extraordinary grouping, with what seems to us its unreasonable mixing up of books of totally different character, we are never likely to know. Certain other books, which we now know as "Apocrypha," hovered for a long time on the edge of the Canon of Old Testament Scripture; but they were finally relegated to the uncanonical list, probably some time before the Christian Era.

Of these three divisions, the earliest to be regarded as accepted sacred Scripture was that of the Law. The Prophets came next; and the Hagiographa was the last division to be completed—a fact which may perhaps account, to some extent, for the mixed character of its contents, as a place had to be found in this sole remaining division for the books which had at last won recognition as sacred, whatever their class and substance might be. As to the time when recognition definitely came to the three sections, it is fairly certain

that the Law was accepted in its present form by about 450 B.C., the Prophets, by about 300 B.C., and the Hagiographa, by about 100 B.C. Extreme views, conservative or advanced, would shift these dates to periods much earlier or later, as the case may be; but it is probably safe to consider that the dates given are moderately secure, and to conclude that the Hebrew Old Testament was complete, practically as we now have it, by a century before the coming of our Lord.

When we come to deal with the contents of the second section of our book—the New Testament—we are on very different ground. The material of which it is composed consists of five historical books (four of them largely biographical), a number of letters by various authors, dealing with various doctrinal questions, and matters of practice and of discipline which had arisen in connection with different congregations of the Christian Church, a small element of personal correspondence, and another example of the visionary or Apocalyptic literature, which has already appeared in the Old Testament. In marked contrast to our ignorance with regard to the dates of the original books of the Old Testament, we may fairly claim that we know, within comparatively narrow limits, when these writings were composed. It is likely that the half-century between A.D. 50 and 100 covers the composition of all the books now accepted as forming part of the New Testament; though again critics on both sides would contend respectively for earlier or later dates. On the other hand, we are not to imagine that this comparative precision of dating can be extended to the complete New Testament as we now have it. The question of what books formed part of the Testament, and what books, however much held in reverence, did not, was one which took a long time to settle.

The four Gospels were the first documents to establish themselves as a definite authoritative group—a position which was reached fairly early in the second century; but quite a number of other gospels circulated among the members

of the early Church, and were for long received with a reverence scarcely less than that accorded to the canonical four. It was long, however, before such books as 2 and 3 John, 2 Peter, Jude, and the Apocalypse were generally accepted, and even in the fourth century their claims were still disputed by some; while, at the other end of the scale, such books as the Shepherd of Hermas, the so-called Epistle of Barnabas, and the Epistle of Clement clung to the skirts of the Canon just as the uncanonical gospels did at the upper end.

The Church of the first three Christian centuries had no New Testament, in the sense in which we use the title. Each congregation or district might have copies of a few of the books which we now recognise as part of the Testament, with perhaps, here and there, an original letter of Paul, or another apostle; but the precious collection of one district would differ from that of another, and one would be strong where another was weak; while in almost every case, books would be treasured which were not destined to find a place in the final Canon of the New Testament.

So gradually, through such long periods of selection and hesitation, and at periods comparatively speaking so late in the history of both sections of the book, did the various writings which make up the two Testaments vindicate their unique position, and come to be recognised as the only books which have the right to be regarded as Holy Scripture. We have next to deal with the question of how each of these two great sections grew up, how the books which compose it were written down and preserved, and what is the state of the material forms in which they have survived. These matters will form the subject of our next two chapters, for the two Testaments differ from each other as widely as possible in almost every one of these respects.

CHAPTER TWO

How the Old Testament was written and preserved

"ARE there not," says Browning's "Paracelsus,"

> "Are there not . . . .
> Two points in the adventure of the diver,
> One—when, a beggar, he prepares to plunge,
> One—when, a prince, he rises with his pearl?"

Similarly, one suspects, there are just two points in the relation of the mind of the average man to the pearl of Holy Scripture. One is quite clear and definite—his possession of his own English Bible, a treasure which he may prize more or less highly, but which is at least a reality of the present to him. The other is as vague as its companion is clear—his idea of the far-off time and way in which this treasure first began to take the original shape from which it has gradually been transformed, while retaining its essential substance and truth, into the book, "printed on paper, and bound in leather," which lies in his pew at church, and which he professes to rely upon for the guidance of his life at home and abroad.

We can trace back our English Bible through all its various forms and renderings, to the early days when Wycliffe first gave his rendering of it to our race; and always it is essentially the same book, its successive versions differing marvellously little from one another, in spite of all the changes of language and usage which have marked the last five and a half centuries. But we know, vaguely enough, it may be, that there was a time when this was not so, when not only was the book written in another language or

languages, but when there was no such book at all; and that this time was succeeded by a time when it gradually and slowly came into being during long centuries, was written down in ways which seem very strange to us now, and was at last, at a very long last, stereotyped in the form out of which it was rendered into the ancient speech of England by our first translators. To tell, in very brief outline, something of how all this happened in the case of the Old Testament, is the object of this chapter.

The ancient world, by the time at which the earliest records which must have formed the basis of the documents which lie behind the present Old Testament were written, had long been familiar with various different systems of writing. Of these, two were supreme, the system of Egypt, using the beautiful but difficult hieroglyphic writing, with its elaborate pictorial symbols, and the Babylonian system, used also by the Assyrians, which, though its origin was also in pictorial representations of natural objects, had long since discarded this in favour of the highly conventionalised system known as cuneiform, or wedge-shaped character, in which the original pictures were represented, generally quite unrecognisably, by arrangements of wedges or arrow-heads.

Both systems used frequently to carve their respective records of importance upon stone, so as to secure their permanence; but for the ordinary purposes of writing they used more manageable bases. Egypt, as everyone knows, adopted the handy and convenient fibre of her papyrus-plant, and thus was the true originator of the paper which has played so great a part in the education of the human race, and the multiplication and preservation of its records; Babylon pinned her faith to a material which was as handy for her as the papyrus plant was to Egypt, but which was destined to handicap her system of writing in the long run as much as it had been facilitated by the adoption of conventional symbols in place of the too elaborate picture-writing. The Babylonian method was that of the clay tablet, on which the wedges forming the words and sentences to be

recorded were impressed, while the clay was soft, by the stylus of the scribe.

It is almost impossible for us, habituated as we are to the infinite ease and the unlimited possibilities of the use of paper, to realise from what a burden we have been saved by the triumph of the Egyptian papyrus over the Babylonian brick. Libraries of clay tablets, where the shelves look more like a bricklayer's yard than anything else, newspapers and magazines that would have to be weighed out by the hundredweight and delivered by traction-engine—literature, in any sense that we can understand, must have been impossible under such conditions, and anything like our present universal distribution of books and other printed matter could never have been dreamed of. It may appear to some that this would not have been altogether a misfortune, if it had involved the non-existence of the bulk of our modern journalism and fiction; but even this undoubtedly great advantage would probably seem dearly bought when the day's news came in by the stone, or the library floor collapsed under the weight of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

Yet there was a time when it seemed practically certain that cuneiform writing and clay tablets were to be the doom of the writing and reading world; and it is to such a time that the earliest documents whose matter relates them to our English Bible belong. The discovery of the Tell el-Amarna Tablets in 1887 taught us that at that period which may be roughly equated with the first beginnings of Hebrew nationality, it was not the light and convenient papyrus-roll of Egypt which was the universal means of communication between the races of the ancient East, but the clumsy inscribed brick of Babylonia. Three hundred years later, when the miserable period of the Judges was dragging out its slow length in Palestine, just a century before the establishment of the Kingship under Saul and David, the tale of the adventures of Wenamon, the unlucky envoy to Phoenicia of the great Egyptian God Amen, tells us that the business men of Phoenicia were learning the advantages of paper over clay,

for part of the material which the envoy sends for, to barter against the cedars of Lebanon which he had been sent to buy, consists of five hundred rolls of papyrus. Yet even till a far later day, indeed until the kingdom of Israel had been extinct for more than half a century, and that of Judah was within a century of its fall, the great Assyrian library of Nineveh, from which have been gathered the documents that first showed us the common ground of tradition on which Hebrew and Assyrian and Babylonian alike built their history of the beginnings, was being assembled by Ashurbanipal in the shape of many thousands of clay tablets, while even Cyrus wrote his story of the Fall of Babylon in the cumbrous old form which had endured for so many centuries.

Long before this, however, the more convenient Egyptian form of the papyrus roll was definitely making its way to its final triumph; and we may be certain that for the earliest written documents of the Old Testament the roll form was used, though it is probable that the material employed was generally some form of prepared skin, and not papyrus, whose fragility, as well as the difficulty of obtaining it regularly, must have restricted its use in a country so poor, and so subject to disturbance, as Palestine. Stone was used for inscriptions of great importance, or for which permanency was desired, as we see from Jeremiah's statement—"The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond," and the discovery of the Siloam Inscription describing the engineering feat of Hezekiah's time which brought the water of the Virgin's Fountain within the walls of Jerusalem has given us an example not only of its use, but also of the old Hebrew character in which writing was then done. Tablets were also used by private persons for writing purposes, as Isaiah tells us more than once (VIII. 1, XXX. 8—both R.V.); but the use of the parchment roll was general for all documents of any length. Jeremiah was bidden take "a roll of a book" in which to write his words of doom, and the fact that King Jehoiakim, when he had heard

the reading of three or four columns of the unpalatable warning, slit the roll to pieces with the scribe's penknife which was used for erasing mistakes from parchment, but could not be used on the thin and fragile papyrus, shows that he was dealing with the stouter material.

We must suppose, therefore, that by the time when the earliest documents of the Old Testament came to be written the form and material employed would be the familiar roll of parchment. Certainly the later copies were on skins, and it is not likely that at any earlier date the less durable papyrus was used for documents of such importance. The parchment might be rolled either on a single roller, or on two ; and in the latter case it was unrolled from the one and rolled up on the other as the reading progressed. This form, with the double roller, came eventually to be almost universally used, especially for the sacred rolls used in the service of the synagogues. The writing which was used upon the rolls was not the bold and square form of lettering which is offered to us by a printed Hebrew Bible. This square character was only adopted during the period between the Exile and the coming of Our Lord ; prior to the Exile, and indeed for some time after the Return, the old character known as Old Hebrew was used.

One of the oldest examples extant of this ancient form of writing, which was common to Palestine, Phoenicia, and the smaller countries round about, is the inscription on the famous pillar of Mesha, King of Moab, known as the Moabite Stone. It dates from the time of King Ahab of Israel—about 850 B.C., and is of interest, not only for the historical facts which it records, but because it lets us see the form in which the first elements of our Bible were originally written down. The Siloam Inscription dates from perhaps a century and a half later, and is of extreme interest as giving us the contemporary record of the workers in a scene described by the prophet Isaiah of Jerusalem. We know that this old Hebrew character had been abandoned for some time before the coming of Our Lord from the fact that He refers

to one of the letters of the square Hebrew character, the letter *yod*, in the utterance (Matthew v. 18) in which He says, using manifestly a current proverbial expression, that "one *jot* or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law." "Tittle" is the tiny finial to a consonant, distinguishing it from another of similar shape, e.g. the Hebrew "b" has a projection to distinguish it from "k." This projection is the "Tittle." "Jot" is "Yod," which was the smallest letter of the square character, but was by no means so in the old Hebrew script. The newer script, therefore, must have been in use for a considerable time, before such a proverb could have grown up.

We are not to imagine, however, that even in the time of Our Lord the manuscripts of the Hebrew Scriptures which He used in His reading had the same appearance, as regards their writing, as the Hebrew Bible of to-day. The form of the consonants was the same, and they were written, as at present, in the opposite way from our own writing, i.e. from right to left, instead of from left to right. The difference lay in the fact that whereas, in the modern Hebrew Bible, the writing is accompanied with a number of points and strokes which represent the vowels, in ancient practice only the consonants were written, the vowels being omitted and left for the reader to supply out of his own knowledge. It can be seen at a glance what an opening was thus left for misunderstandings and corruptions of the original text, when once the writer of it and his immediate scholars had passed away, and there was no one who could say with authority what vowels should have been supplied in instances where the whole sense of a passage might be changed by the importation of a set of vowels different from those which the original writer had in mind.

Thus, to take a very simple instance, we may write the two consonants WR, and the word we may mean to express may be War; but it could also be read Ware, Wire, Wore, or Were, and only the sense of the context would suggest which vowels to supply. In some cases it would be very

I מזמור לדוד יהוה רעי לא אחסר: בנאות דשא ירביצני
על־מי מנוחת ינהלני: נפשי ישובב ינחני במעגלי־צדק
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אך טוב וחסד ירדפוני כל־ימי חיי ושבתי בבית־יהוה
לארך ימים:

II מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד יְהוָה רֹעִי לֹא אֶחְסָר: בִּנְאוֹת דֶּשֶׁא יַרְבִּיצֵנִי
עַל־מֵי מְנֻחוֹת יְנַהֲלֵנִי: נַפְשִׁי יְשׁוֹבֵב יַנְחֵנִי בְמַעְגְּלֵי־צֶדֶק
לְמַעַן שְׁמוֹ: גַּם כִּי־אֵלֵךְ בְּגֵיא צַלְמָוֶת לֹא־אִירָא רָע כִּי־
אַתָּה עִמָּדִי שִׁבְטְךָ וּמִשְׁעַנְתֶּךָ הֵמָּה יְנַחֲמֻנִי: תַּעֲרֹךְ לְפָנַי
שֻׁלְחָן נֶגֶד צֹרְרָי דִּשַּׁנְתָּ בַשֶּׁמֶן רֹאשִׁי כוֹסִי רְוָיָה: אַךְ טוֹב
וָחֶסֶד יִרְדְּפוּנִי כָּל־יְמֵי חַיָּי וְשַׁבְתִּי בְּבֵית יְהוָה לְאֹרֶךְ יָמִים:

III [illegible]

No. I shows the 23rd Psalm in Hebrew without the vowels or points. No. II shows the same text, but with the vowels added. No. III contains the first four verses of the same psalm in Syriac or Aramaic without the vowels. All are to be read from right to left. The vowels were added between the 6th and 9th cents: A.D.

difficult to determine from the sense of the context what vowels should be read; and in point of fact there are passages of the Old Testament in which the character of the text is altogether changed by an alteration of the vowels in certain words. Thus another difficulty of no small importance was added to all those which beset the preservation of a correct text through the infirmities of copyists and the fragility of manuscripts. It was not till about the beginning of the seventh century of our era that the school of Jewish scholars known as the Massoretes introduced a remedy for the vowel-less condition of the Old Testament text by the provision of the present system of vowel points. Since their time, what is known, in consequence of their labours, as the Massoretic Text has become the standard text of the Old Testament, and all extant manuscripts contain substantially this text.

The most minute care was taken by the heads of Hebrew religion to secure reverent handling and extreme accuracy in transcription on the part of the copyists of the sacred books. The scribe was not allowed to alter a word, even though the MS. from which he was transcribing was manifestly in error. Instead, in the margin the Hebrew word "written" was inserted, and was followed by "read" with the correct word. The reader was thus guided without infringement of the sanctity of the ancient MS. The regulations laid down in the Talmud to this end are too long to quote in full, but one or two instances of their strictness will give us an idea of the whole. Some of the rules, such as those which ordained that the copyist had to sit at his work in full Jewish dress, having first washed his whole body, and that even should a king address him while he was writing the holy name of God, he was to take no notice of him, merely belong to that over-scrupulosity in minutiae with which Our Lord reproved the Pharisees and Scribes of His own time; but others were highly necessary, and were calculated to secure uniformity in the texts produced, certainly in their form, and, so far as strictness could do it,

in their substance also. "A synagogue roll must be written on the skins of clean animals, prepared for the particular use of the synagogue by a Jew. These must be fastened together with strings taken from clean animals. Every skin must contain a certain number of columns, equal throughout the entire codex. The length of each column must not extend over less than forty-eight, or more than sixty lines; and the breadth must consist of thirty letters."

Such rules, of course, do no more than to secure uniformity of form in the copies, an end, which, though highly desirable, is not of the first importance; but the rules for the copyist himself are another matter, and show that the religious authorities, in spite of all their straining out of gnats in other respects, were vividly alive to the dangers which beset the copyist, and the temptations into which he was liable to fall. "An authentic copy must be the exemplar, from which the transcriber ought not in the least to deviate. No word or letter, not even a *yod*, must be written from memory, the scribe not having looked at the codex before him." If such instructions had always been carefully followed, our copies of ancient manuscripts would not show the numerous and sometimes exasperating variations which they do. Even with them, inaccuracies would creep in, for the most perfect copyist is human after all, and therefore fallible; but the standard of accuracy among Jewish transcribers must have been kept higher than in most other cases by such rules as that which ordained that "The rolls in which these regulations are not observed are condemned to be buried in the ground or burned; or they are banished to the schools, to be used as reading-books."

So far, then, as regulations could secure it, we might suppose that the condition of the surviving manuscript copies of the Old Testament would be as nearly perfect as human frailty would allow; and therefore, it is with all the greater disappointment that we learn that there is not one single manuscript of the Hebrew Old Testament in existence which dates from earlier than the ninth century A.D. In

other words, our earliest manuscripts of the New Testament are at least five hundred years earlier than the earliest copies of the more ancient writings, while we have not a single copy of any of the Old Testament books which is not separated by at least a thousand years from the date at which the book was originally written. This huge gap between our existing sources and their originals is due to various reasons, among which may be reckoned the wars which have devastated Palestine, and the innumerable persecutions to which the Hebrew race has been subjected; but what is perhaps the chief reason is also one which may help to lessen, to some extent, our disappointment at the comparative lateness of our extant copies, for it is simply the extreme accuracy which was insisted on in the making of copies.

A copy prepared with all the minute care prescribed by the Talmudic regulations was regarded as being of equal value with the more ancient manuscript from which it was copied. The supposition being that all were equally correct, age was rather a disadvantage to a manuscript than an advantage, for it meant that the roll was more likely to have become damaged or imperfect in the course of years. Whenever it was found to be so, the damaged copy was at once "scrapped," as being unfit for further use, instead of being carefully preserved, as it would be now. Each synagogue had its lumber-room, where outworn and imperfect copies of the Scriptures were stored; and there they either perished from neglect during the lapse of years, or were destroyed of set purpose when the place became overcrowded. It is more than likely, as long experience of the failings of even the most careful copyists has taught us, that the Jews were entirely wrong in regarding a new copy of their Scriptures, no matter what might be the care with which it was written, as of equal accuracy and value with its original; but at least the view which they held is intelligible, and has a superficial appearance of common sense about it, which renders its adoption not quite so ridiculous as it would otherwise be.

Thus, then, the somewhat astonishing fact is accounted for

that we have no manuscripts of the Old Testament extant which can be compared in point of age with those of the New Testament. The same reason of the extreme care taken in transcription, which rendered the careful preservation of the more ancient copies useless in Jewish eyes, has also prevented the existence of the innumerable variations which characterise the extant manuscripts of the New Testament. We have seen that almost every possible detail of the external appearance of an Old Testament manuscript was prescribed by the Talmudic rule. Accordingly the manuscripts of the Old Testament present a somewhat dreary uniformity, compared with the variety which is characteristic of their New Testament compeers.

It is possible, generally, to distinguish the country in which a particular manuscript was written, though scholars are divided as to the place which should be assigned to the different products, e.g. of Spain and Germany, in regard to their value and accuracy. It is also possible to distinguish between manuscripts which offer an Eastern text, emanating from the School of Babylon, and those which give a Western text, coming from the School of Palestine ; but even between these two schools the variations are comparatively trifling, both in scale and importance. Old Testament manuscripts, therefore, are by no means so interesting as New Testament ones ; but on the other hand, late as even the earliest copy of the Massoretic text may be, we may rest assured that the text which the extant copies offer to us is as nearly an exact reproduction of the ancient sources from which it is derived as anything which is the product of human hands and brain is ever likely to be. There are, of course, many manuscripts which claim a date much earlier than the ninth century of our era ; but in no case is the claim generally accepted by modern scholarship, while in many instances positive fraud in the insertion of a date much more ancient that the real one has been proved.

We have seen, in the previous chapter, the different dates at which the various books making up the Old Testament

were accepted by the Jewish Church as forming part of the Canon of Holy Scripture; and we can now state in a sentence or two the position as regards the date to which the text as given in our extant manuscripts can be traced back. It is practically certain that the manuscripts give us a text which reached its final form about the seventh century A.D. It is also certain that the scholars who made the final revision at that time made no alteration of any importance on a text going back to about five centuries before that date. Therefore the text of our Old Testament may be considered to have been transmitted without any change of moment from about A.D. 100. One famous modern scholar, indeed, maintains that all our existing Hebrew manuscripts are lineally descended from a single copy which was made in the reign of the Emperor Hadrian (A.D. 102–117) during that emperor's great persecution of the Jews; and while this is perhaps an extreme view, there can be little doubt that the present Massoretic text derives from very much about that time.

But, while this is so, there are other sources which carry our knowledge of the Old Testament considerably further back than this. First of these, though, as we shall see, by no means so important as might be imagined, is the document known as the Samaritan Pentateuch. This is supposed to owe its origin to the well-known schism, which came to a head in the time of Nehemiah, between the Returned Exiles of the Jewish community at Jerusalem and the mixed community which had been settled in Samaria by the Assyrian kings after the fall of the Northern Kingdom. Nehemiah tells us that he drove out of Jerusalem the grandson of Eliashib the Jewish high-priest, who had made a mixed marriage. This young priest, Manasseh, found refuge among the Samaritans, and set up on Mt. Gerizim a rival temple to that at Jerusalem. "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain," said the woman of Samaria to Jesus. He is believed to have carried with him a copy of the Pentateuch, which at that time, it will be remembered, was the only

portion of the Old Testament Scriptures recognised as inspired; and this, with the substitution of Gerizim for Ebal as the hill on which the altar of memorial should be placed, and some other alterations, became the Bible of the Samaritans, who refused to admit into their Canon the Prophets and the Hagiographa, when these were subsequently admitted by the Jews, refusing also to adopt the square character, and continuing to adhere to the Old Hebrew Script.

It would seem that here we have an independent source of immense value for comparison with the rival Hebrew manuscripts; but the variations between the received text and the Samaritan text, though numerous enough, have proved to be mostly of very small importance, where they are not due to the necessities of the controversy between Jew and Samaritan. In addition to the fact that the Samaritan version contains only the Pentateuch, which is precisely the portion of the Old Testament which is best authenticated otherwise, there is no extant Samaritan manuscript which can be dated earlier than the tenth century of our era. The little Samaritan community at Nablus possesses a copy which claims to have been written by Abisha, the great-grandson of Moses, in the thirteenth year after the conquest of Canaan; but this claim, which, if established, would indeed revolutionise all our ideas as to ancient manuscripts, is not taken seriously by any scholar.

Of all our versions of the Old Testament, however, by far the most important for the purpose of comparison with the extant Hebrew manuscripts is the Greek translation which is known as the Septuagint, or the Translation of the Seventy (often cited as the LXX). The story of how it came into existence is, as told, largely a myth; but behind it lies a certain amount of truth. After the death of Alexander the Great, his general Ptolemy came into possession of Egypt as his share of the vast empire which Alexander had conquered. Under his rule and that of his successors, the Ptolemaic Dynasty, Egypt flourished exceedingly, and

attracted multitudes of immigrants from other lands. Of these, great numbers of Jews settled in the newly-founded city of Alexandria, where they established a powerful Jewish colony. Here, in the midst of a Greek-speaking community, the Jews speedily learned to use Greek as their natural tongue, and hence there arose eventually the necessity for having their sacred writings rendered into the only language which was familiar to them. This origin for the great version, however, was not sufficiently romantic or glorious for the imagination of the Jews, and they created a much more picturesque story of how it came into being.

According to this legend, Ptolemy Philadelphus (284–247 B.C.), hearing of the existence of the Hebrew Scriptures, wished to obtain a copy of them for the great library of Alexandria. Accordingly he sent an embassy bearing magnificent presents to the High-priest at Jerusalem, and with them a letter begging the priest to send him a copy of the holy books, with some men capable of translating them. Six translators were therefore selected from each of the twelve tribes, and these seventy-two scholars set out for Alexandria bearing a copy of the Law written in letters of gold. On their arrival they were magnificently received by King Ptolemy, and when they had been feasted and had given a demonstration of their learning, they were set apart, either each in a solitary cell, as one version of the story says, or by pairs in thirty-six separate cells, to carry out their work. At the end of exactly seventy-two days, each scholar, or each pair of scholars, had produced a complete translation; and when these seventy-two (or thirty-six) different translations were compared, they were found to agree precisely with one another in every word, thus proving that they were directly inspired by God!

The modern reader will accept as much or as little of this marvellous tale as his native credulity inclines him to accept; all that is certainly true is that the Septuagint version was at least begun at Alexandria in or about the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus, and that, as one would expect, the books of the Pentateuch were the first to be translated. It is quite manifest,

from the differences of style which mark the different books, that the rest of the Old Testament was translated at different times, and by different scholars ; while the Book of Ecclesiasticus, which, along with the other books of the Apocrypha, is included in the translation, was not in existence at the time of Philadelphus. Some of the Apocryphal books, of course, 2 Esdras, the extra parts of Esther, Wisdom, part of Baruch, The Song of the Three Children, and 2 Maccabees, were never written in Hebrew ; but the rest of the Apocrypha had for a long time much the same circulation as the minor books of the Hagiographa. Finally, however, when the Hebrew Canon was settled they were left outside, and this settled their fate so far as Hebrew circulation and transmission were concerned, so that at last their Hebrew form perished, and we only know them through Greek translations such as the LXX. Indeed, Jerome, when making his great translation, the Vulgate, rejected them, because they were not to be found in a Hebrew text ; but the Roman Church later inserted them again into the great version, and they still form an integral part of the Bible of the Church of Rome.

The great translation of the Seventy, once completed, speedily became the Bible of all Greek-speaking Jews, even in Palestine. At the time of Our Lord's ministry, Hebrew had ceased to be the language of Palestine, and was known only by the Rabbis and their pupils ; Aramaic or Syriac was the spoken language of the country, and Greek was the generally used literary language. Hence most of the quotations from the Old Testament used by Our Lord and His Apostles are taken, not from the Hebrew, but from the Septuagint ; and this usage of the famous version rapidly increased with the spread of Christianity among Greek-speaking peoples. Thus the first Bible of the Christian Church, at a time when it had not yet wakened to the conception of a new body of Holy Scripture embodying the truths which were its own foundation, was not the Hebrew Old Testament, but this most important Greek version of it.

The fact that the new Church based its claims upon the promises and prophecies offered through the medium of the Septuagint led to a curious overturn of Hebrew feeling with regard to it. Hitherto it had been their pride, and they had taken delight, as we have seen, in magnifying its origin by surrounding it with mythical glories. Now that it was being used in the service of a doctrine which they hated, they would have no more to do with it. Its accuracy was denied, and several other versions in Greek were produced, none of which, however, has attained to anything like the celebrity or authority of the one which they were intended to supersede. The Septuagint remains by far the most important authority for the text of the Old Testament, apart from the Hebrew manuscripts themselves, and, owing to its greater antiquity, it has in some respects a greater claim to authority even than these, and its alternatives must always be seriously considered on those points (and they are neither few nor unimportant) where it offers us variations from the received Hebrew text.

Such then was the state of the Bible of the Hebrews, which was destined to form the first portion of the Christian Bible, at the time of the coming of Our Lord. Its Canon had already been established, and embraced exactly the same books which form the Old Testament of the Christian Church (save in its Roman branch) and the Bible of the Jewish Church to-day. The Apocryphal books had already been ruled out of the Canon, and were not included in the Hebrew Manuscripts; but this fact was largely nullified by the fact that they were included in the Septuagint version, which was the Bible in common use among all but the learned. The early days of Christianity, with the spread of the new faith to Syria, Mesopotamia, and North Africa, led to the creation of other versions of the sacred books of the ancient Church, to meet the needs of the young Christian communities who knew no Greek; and thus arose the various Syriac versions, the Coptic, the Ethiopic, and the Old Latin version, the last being made, not as might be imagined, for the Roman Church

(for Greek was too generally read there for this to be necessary at that time) but for the once thriving and vigorous Church of Northern Africa. This was the position, as regards the Old Testament, when the great Revision of the end of the fourth and beginning of the fifth century was undertaken by Jerome, and resulted in the version which was the parent of our first English Bible.

CHAPTER THREE

Growth and Preservation of the New Testament

VERY different from the story of the Old Testament is that of the way in which the New Testament grew up. We have to realise (and it is very difficult to do so) that the early Christians never dreamed for a moment of making such an addition to the Bible as the New Testament has turned out to be, and that, even when the writings of the Apostles began to be gathered and prized, it was many long years before they were placed by the Church on the same level with the ancient books of the Old Testament Canon. The thing was perfectly natural, strange as it may be to us to think of it. They were mainly Jews, to whom every letter of the ancient books of their faith was sacred; they had heard the Apostles, some of them had even heard Jesus Christ Himself acknowledging the authority of the ancient Word, and appealing to it on disputed matters, or resting upon it in times of trial. The Old Testament was their Bible, as sacred to them as the complete Scriptures are to us; and it would have seemed to them as incongruous, and even irreverent, for one of themselves, even though clad with Apostolic authority, to talk of adding anything to the Bible, as such a thing would seem to us to-day.

Another thing which may seem very strange to us is also very natural, if we will only try to think ourselves back into something like the position which these early Christians occupied. That is the fact that for some considerable period after the departure of the Lord there was no attempt to put into writing the facts of His life and death, or any account

of His sayings, and seemingly no demand on the part of the Christian community that this should be done. Such a task would seem to us the first and most obvious duty of those who had the ordering of the growing Church. This, however, is the wisdom after the event which is always so prudent at a cheap rate, and so futile; and it is also the wisdom of a people who have grown up in an environment in which we have been so accustomed to lean upon the printed word that we have lost the power of understanding alike the might of the spoken word, and the ease and accuracy of its transmission which have characterised ages not so much in bondage to the press.

What the Christians of those days wanted to hear, apart from the authentic voice of God which they found in the ancient records of their race, was the living story of Jesus from the lips of those who had been eye-witnesses of His life, death, and resurrection. What was the need of the written word on such things, when they could listen to Peter telling again how the Lord turned and looked upon him from the Judgment Hall of Caiaphas, or John repeating those sacred words to which he had listened as he leaned upon the Master's breast in the Upper Chamber? If they had been able to foresee all the long centuries of waiting, they would have realised the need of a written record, not for themselves, but for those who should come after; but all of them, from the Apostles downwards, were looking for a speedy return of their Master, and even John, writing in his old age, was still not quite sure as to what Christ meant by that strange word that He spoke to Peter by the Sea of Galilee—"If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" and though he did not presume to claim it as a promise, still wistfully hoped that it might prove so, and that he might see that blessed face again before he died.

In such conditions, and with such a hope, a Gospel or Gospels such as we have in our New Testament would have been a superfluity. Nobody would want a written story when there was the chance of hearing about Jesus from those who

had been His companions. Each Apostle would tell his own story of his fellowship with his Lord, selecting the incidents and sayings which had most appealed to himself at the time; and thus a multiple tradition would grow up, presenting the life and work of Jesus from a number of different points of view, and interpreting Him through the medium of a number of different personalities, and each fragment of this tradition would tend to become stereotyped as the Apostle responsible for it repeated it again and again to his different audiences. This multiple tradition constituted the Gospel of the primitive Church—a Gospel which must have contained a great deal that we do not find in the narratives of our four Evangelists, and which must have been even more vivid than the living pictures of Matthew, Mark, or Luke. Traces of such a Gospel we find here and there, in the preservation of utterances of Our Lord for which we look in vain in the extant Gospels. Such traces we find in Paul's "Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive," and in his deliverance to the Corinthian Church of the order of the Sacrament of the Last Supper—"I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you."

The general belief of scholars is that in the Gospel of St. Mark we come as near as we are ever likely to do to the substance and manner of this unwritten Gospel of the early Church; for, as everybody knows, Mark is believed to have committed to writing what he had learned from the lips of St. Peter himself. But, while this is so, it is certain that Mark only gives us a small fraction of the mass of tradition which drifted in an oral form among the different branches of the Church, and, with the divine words of the Old Testament, and the worship and Sacraments, formed the spiritual nourishment of the early believers for a whole generation. One remembers an old Victorian picture of the completion of St. John's Gospel, with a kind of Synod of Apostles laying their hands on the finished manuscript in attestation of its truth—"This is the disciple which testifieth

of these things, and wrote these things : and we know that his testimony is true." But, however creditable such a picture may have been to the imagination of the artist, it could never have had any foundation in fact. It is practically certain that none of the Apostles, with the possible exception of St. John, ever saw any of our written Gospels. Indeed, it was the presence of the Apostles with the primitive Church which rendered the production of written Gospels unlikely because unnecessary.

Accordingly, though the four Gospels stand first, as is right, in our New Testament, they were far from being the first sacred writings of the Church, and in fact were almost the last to be produced. The first of the twenty-seven writings which make up our New Testament were the letters written, chiefly by Paul, the great missionary Apostle, to certain of the churches in which he was interested, or which had sought his counsel with regard to vexed points of doctrine or discipline. The first of these letters which has survived is what we now know as the First Epistle to the Thessalonians, and it was written, in all probability, about A.D. 48, possibly by Sylvanus, to the dictation of the Apostle. If we are to try to imagine the appearance of this first of the sacred books of the Church, we must fancy several sheets of papyrus, for which Paul would pay in the shops anything from fourpence to a shilling of our money per sheet, pasted together to form a roll about three feet long, on which Sylvanus, or whoever wrote down the Apostle's words, writes the message to Thessalonica in perhaps five columns of two or three inches wide. A longer letter, such as the Epistle to the Romans, which Paul wrote about six years later, would make a roll about eleven and a half feet long ; while a short one, such as 2 Thessalonians, would only need about fifteen inches of papyrus. The finished letter, signed by the Apostle's own hand, would be rolled up, tied with a thread, sealed, and forwarded to the head of the church to which it was destined by the first Christian traveller who happened to be available.

On its arrival at its destination, however, we are not to

imagine it being treated as a sacred book. It was simply a personal communication from a great Christian teacher, to be reverenced, no doubt, because of the reputation for wisdom and knowledge of holy things and Church order of its author, but in no wise to be regarded as standing on the same level with the sacred parchments of the Old Testament which the church treasured. It would be read and listened to with interest at the Sunday service of the church; but only as the counsel of a fellow Christian to his brethren. Some of its teaching might even be questioned by some of the hearers, as we know to have happened on more than one occasion. Then it would be laid aside among the treasures of the church, because of the reverence due to its author as a great Christian; or it might be passed on to another church for its edification, and might be copied there, before it was put into further circulation. Some of Paul's letters bear instructions that they were thus to be circulated, and that exchanges were to be made of the letters between two churches which had both been fortunate enough to receive them.

It was in this way that practically all the books of the New Testament, with the exception of the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and the Apocalypse, came into being. They were all written, whoever wrote them, for a special purpose, and to a special section of the church—in some cases even to a particular individual; and it was only after a long period of what we may call unofficial circulation, in which they were used for practical guidance by the churches which possessed either the originals or copies, were reverenced because of the reputation of their authors or the wisdom and spiritual value of their contents, but were by no means regarded as Holy Scripture, that they came at last to vindicate their right to be considered as the Word of God, speaking through His servants of the Christian time, as He had spoken through the holy men of old. During this probationary period, as we may call it, the frail papyrus of the originals would be subject to all the hazards and the wear and tear

incident to their wide circulation, and we need not be surprised that nothing approaching to an original, or even an early copy, has survived.

Meanwhile the Church was gradually, and doubtless with a pang of disappointment, coming to realise that an oral Gospel was not going to prove adequate to her needs. First the fire and sword of persecution, and then the natural passing of the years was beginning to thin the ranks of the men who had seen and heard the Lord Jesus in the days of His flesh; and the Second Coming which had been looked for with such confidence began to recede into a dim distance. The writer of 2 Peter quotes the question only to rebuke it as the utterance of scoffers; but there were doubtless many who were genuine Christians and far from scoffing who began to ask with sore hearts "Where is the promise of His coming?" Soon it must have been evident that it was merely a question of a few years till the Church would be left with not one solitary man living who could tell "that which he had heard, which he had seen with his eyes, which he had looked upon, and his hands had handled, of the Word of Life." It was conceivable that the very memory of Christ might dwindle and perish from the earth, as the years passed, and the tradition grew dimmer and yet more dim. Browning has pictured the dying John, last survivor of the favoured twelve, facing the vision of such a situation:

> "nought but ashes here
> That keep awhile my semblance, who was John,—
> Still, when they scatter, there is left on earth
> No one alive who knew (consider this!)
> —Saw with his eyes and handled with his hands
> That which was from the first, the Word of Life.
> How will it be when none more saith, 'I saw'?"

Long before John's death that question began to force itself upon men's minds; and the Church began, under the guidance of its Master's spirit, to find an answer to it almost unconsciously. It was probably somewhere about the year A.D. 65, thirty years or more after the Lord had left His

Church to represent Him on earth, that St. Mark began to put into writing the reminiscences of St. Peter, as he had so often heard them from the lips of his great teacher. Perhaps it was the shock of the martyrdom of his other teacher St. Paul, the year or so before, which made him feel that the night was coming, and that he had better write while it was called day. Anyhow he did begin his task about that time, and the first written of our present Gospels began to grow into permanent shape, as a kind of second line of defence for the Church against the assaults of devouring time.

Here and there, throughout the Church, other men, who had perhaps themselves listened to the Saviour, though they were not of the Twelve, or who had been specially favoured with the friendship of some member of the Apostolate, began to put down in writing what they could remember of what they had heard. By and by quite a number of these little collections of "Reminiscences of Our Lord" began to get into circulation, and were zealously copied by everyone who could get sight of them. Paul was perhaps quoting from an early collection when he begged the elders to remember those (otherwise unrecorded) words of the Lord about it being more blessed to give than to receive. They were often called "Logia," "Sayings" of the Lord, and everyone knows how one of the very first finds of Dr. Grenfell and Dr. Hunt at Oxyrhynchus was a fragment of a copy, dating from about A.D. 200, of one of these ancient collections of Sayings of Jesus. This was in 1897, and in 1903 the same excavators came upon another fragment, containing more of these Sayings.

We have the evidence of Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, who was in touch with the men of Apostolic times, that St. Matthew wrote down in Aramaic the Sayings of Jesus; but this collection, which would have been of supreme interest, is lost, along with many others. It is certainly not the Gospel which we have under Matthew's name in our New Testament. It is Papias also who tells the origin of St. Mark's Gospel in the Reminiscences of St. Peter, as

already detailed. St. Matthew's Gospel may have been called so because it used as its basis Matthew's collection of the Sayings of Jesus ; but it also derives largely either from Mark, or from the same source of information which Mark used, and its appearance probably followed that of Mark's Gospel, with no very long interval. The third Gospel, which must have quickly followed the first two, has often been considered to represent the Pauline tradition, as Mark does the Petrine. The two writings attributed to St. Luke both represent themselves as being written for the instruction of a particular believer named Theophilus ; but it is difficult to imagine writings of such great importance owing their origin merely to the writer's solicitude for an individual. The name " Theophilus " may mean either " Lover of God," or " Beloved by God," and it is more reasonable to assume that in his use of it St. Luke was addressing, not a specific individual, but the typical believer, as representing the Church. " The former treatise have I made, O Beloved of God."

Perhaps a quarter of a century after the last of the three Synoptic Gospels appears the Fourth, widely different from its predecessors, not only in date, but also in nature. They are simple, straightforward narratives ; it is an interpretation, coloured very markedly by the personality and the meditation of its author. With it the writing of the books which now constitute our New Testament probably ceased, the minor Epistles which have found a place in the Canon, and the Apocalypse, being of earlier date than the Fourth Gospel.

We must not imagine, however, that this implies that the early Church by the year A.D. 100 or thereby, possessed a complete New Testament, such as we have now. The average Testament of any locality, so far as it possessed such a thing, was both larger and smaller than ours. It was smaller, because there would hardly be any single church which would possess copies of all the books of the Canon, and because there were still several books which, though in

circulation, were not yet recognised as having established their place as sacred. Such a book as the Acts of the Apostles would involve the possession of a roll of papyrus about thirty feet long, while the four Gospels together would occupy close upon one hundred feet of the somewhat costly material, and even a letter like that of St. Paul to the Romans would need a roll of about eleven and a half feet long. We may be pretty sure that only the larger and wealthier among the Christian Churches would have even a comparatively complete set of these precious rolls in its book chest, beside the more durable parchments of the Old Testament. The smaller churches in the out-of-the-way localities would have to be content with a few copies from the treasures of the larger ones, with here and there a prized original letter from the hand of Paul or another of the leaders of the Church. Besides, it was many years before all the books of our New Testament were generally accepted by the Church. In the second and third centuries, the claims of 2 and 3 John, 2 Peter, Jude, and the Revelation were still disputed by many; nor were they finally received as Holy Scripture until the fourth century.

On the other hand, the Testament, so far as it can be said to have existed, was larger, because there were still in circulation numerous writings which were held in great reverence throughout the Church, as much so, indeed, as many of the books now received as Canonical. There were several Gospels which are now lost, such as the Gospel to the Hebrews, the Gospel to the Egyptians, and others, fragments of which are beginning to come to light from the rubbish-heaps of Egyptian towns, collections of the Sayings of Jesus, larger and smaller—Epistles such as those of Clement and Barnabas, and other writings such as the Shepherd of Hermas. It was not till the acceptance of Christianity in A.D. 324 by the Emperor Constantine, that the New Testament began, so to speak, to be stabilised. Constantine himself ordered Eusebius of Caesarea, the famous historian of the Church, to provide fifty copies of the Scriptures for the

use of the churches of his great new capital of Constantinople; and such an order implies either that a certain standard of acceptance was in existence, or that it would tend to be rapidly established under the pressure of such demands, which, we may be sure, would not be limited to Constantinople. Accordingly, it is now that we find the first collected New Testaments; and corresponding to this fact is the fact that it is now that we find the first of the great manuscripts which have come down to our own time.

The absence of manuscripts earlier than those of the fourth century is to be deplored, of course; but it is in no wise inexplicable, and is, in fact, only what we might have expected. Papyrus, spite of its suitableness for writing upon, is, after all, a very fragile and perishable medium. If it is allowed to be exposed to continued damp, it decays; if it is kept too dry, it becomes extremely brittle and cracks off. Egypt, its native land, offers the ideal climate for its preservation; but even there, the condition of the papyri which modern research has recovered shows how slight was the tenure of life of a papyrus roll. The present condition of the ending of the Gospel of St. Mark shows one of the mishaps which must often have happened to the ancient manuscripts of the New Testament, and the way in which the man who, with the best intentions, tried to remedy it has complicated the problem of the Bible student. Either by accident, or by continuous use, one important manuscript of this Gospel got mutilated at its concluding sheet, which, with the first sheet of the roll, would obviously be the portion most exposed to tear and wear. The bit of papyrus containing the conclusion of the Gospel cracked off, and after a time got lost, so that the manuscript ended abruptly with the eighth verse of the sixteenth chapter, and with the ominous words "for they were afraid." Then came the well-meaning restorer, doing what he and everybody else thought quite natural and justifiable at that time, and writing on the new sheet which he gummed on to the broken end of the roll, twelve verses which briefly concluded the Gospel on lines

familiar to every one ; and a bone of contention was provided which has exercised and divided scholars ever since, though a fairly unanimous judgment has now been arrived at.

Such accidents, and others far more disastrous, must have been fairly common. Even common wear would account for the finally hopeless condition of the most used manuscripts, and, when these had once been carefully copied, the sentiment of the time, as we have seen in the case of the Old Testament records, would see no sense in the preservation of a frayed and broken papyrus, which was only taking up in the chest space which was needed for the new copy. So, no doubt, perished many an early manuscript, which at the present time would have been worth many times its weight in gold. Add to this the destruction of copies of the Scriptures during the persecutions, and you can realise how high must have been the mortality of the early manuscripts of the Church. In A.D. 303, for instance, an edict of Diocletian ordered the whole of the sacred books of the Christians to be burnt ; and, while we may be sure than many of the Christians succeeded in evading the command, and secreting their precious writings, we may be sure also that countless manuscripts perished, and that even those which survived were none the better for the time during which they were hidden in darkness and damp, or subjected to hasty and rough handling in the attempt to carry them out of the reach of the Emperor's searchers.

The sum of it all is that our oldest manuscripts of the New Testament, though many centuries older than any copy of the Old, are none of them older than the fourth century ; and only two belong to that time, though there are perhaps about a dozen manuscripts or more which contain small portions of the text and date from about the same period. The two great manuscripts are those known respectively as B, or Codex Vaticanus, and ℵ or Codex Sinaiticus ; and of these the Codex Vaticanus is possibly somewhat the older, though the difference in age cannot be much. Both are of the class known as Uncials ; that is to say they are written

in capital letters, which are all written consecutively, without any divisions between the words, thus: INTHEBEGINNING WASTHEWORDANDTHEWORDWASWITHGODANDTHEWORDWAS GOD. For the purpose of saving space, in addition to the crowding of the letters together, words are written smaller as the end of a line is approached, and familiar words are often contracted, as $\overline{\text{GD}}$ and $\overline{\text{MN}}$ for God and Man, while the M's and N's at the end of words are often omitted, the omission being marked by a horizontal line above the letter preceding that omitted—e.g. LONDŌ for London.

The Codex Vaticanus, which has lain for many centuries in the Vatican Library at Rome, was for long almost inaccessible to scholars; but a more enlightened policy has circulated its text through the chief public libraries of the world by means of a facsimile made by order of Pius IX. The manuscript is written upon more than seven hundred leaves of the finest vellum, the sheets being about a foot square, and bound together in book form. We have to thank the meddlesomeness of a tenth century scribe for the fact that it is only possible to see the original beautiful writing here and there, where it has escaped his unwelcome attentions. Dreading, no doubt, lest the precious writing should fade out in the lapse of years, the misguided man inked it all over carefully, only omitting such words as he considered incorrect, and therefore left to perish. Fortunately they have survived just as well as his blundering attempt at improvement. Each page of the manuscript contains three columns, and though it originally included the whole Greek Bible, Old Testament and New alike, it has suffered some losses. It now begins at Genesis XLVI, 28; it has lost Psalms 106–138, and the end of the New Testament, from Hebrews IX, 4, has disappeared. Curiously, while it omits those last twelve verses of our present St. Mark's Gospel, a blank space sufficient to hold the missing verses is left in the manuscript, showing that the writer knew of their existence, and perhaps intended to get authority to insert them later.

The other great fourth century manuscript is Codex

Sinaiticus, known also as ℵ because all the capital letters of our alphabet, by which the great Uncials are distinguished, had been used up before it was discovered. The story of its discovery is of interest as an instance of how neglectful a professedly religious corporation may become of the most precious treasures entrusted to its care, and also as an example of a fate which has doubtless overtaken many another manuscript as precious as Sinaiticus. In May 1844, Dr. Tischendorf, the famous German scholar and critic, visited the Convent of St. Catharine, at the foot of Mt. Sinai, in search of ancient manuscripts. While there he saw in the great hall of the convent a basket full of old parchments, and was informed that already two heaps of similar material had been used to feed the convent fires. Rummaging in the basket, he found a matter of forty sheets of a copy of the Septuagint, which were the most ancient-looking manuscript he had ever seen. Unluckily he was not able to disguise his supreme satisfaction at being allowed to take away these forty sheets which would soon have followed their companions into the convent fireplace, and the monks, realising that there was more in the matter than they had imagined, refused to give him any more. This new knowledge proved an obstacle in the way of rescuing the rest of the precious Codex from the hands of men who neither knew what to make of their treasure, nor were willing to allow others to use it; and even when he once more visited the convent with a commission from the Tsar of Russia, the monks persisted in their stupid policy of dog-in-the-manger-ism.

A farewell visit to the cell of the steward of the convent, the very evening before he left the place for good, resulted, however, in a softening of the monk's heart, or perhaps in a belated admission of a pride which he could no longer conceal. They had been talking about the Septuagint, and the monk, perhaps wishing to show the great scholar that even in that out-of-the-way corner people were not without a tincture of learning, remarked "I too have read a copy of

that Septuagint." So saying, he produced a big bundle wrapped up in a red cloth, and laid it upon his table. To Tischendorf's delight, he found, when he opened the bundle, not only the other fragments which he had seen fifteen years before, when he rescued the forty sheets from the convent fires, but in addition, parts of the rest of the Old Testament, the New Testament complete, and some of the Apocrypha. He asked to be allowed to keep it in his room that night, and to examine it. "That night," he says, "it seemed sacrilege to sleep." One can understand his emotion, for the manuscript to which he had thus strangely been re-introduced was absolutely priceless, its only rival, for antiquity and value, being the great Codex B of the Vatican Library. Negotiations, of course, followed, in which the influence of the Tsar was brought into full play; and the result was that the discoverer was first allowed to take the manuscript to Cairo and to copy it there, then to carry it with him to Russia for further work, and finally to present it to the Tsar; valuable presents, of a kind which they would be more able to appreciate, being made to the monks by the Russian Government. Since then, the manuscript has lain in the library of what was then St. Petersburg, and facsimiles of it have been circulated in all the great libraries of the world.

This great manuscript is written upon vellum made from the finest antelope skin, and the writing is beautiful and unadorned. The original size of the pages was fifteen inches by thirteen and a half, and there are four columns, an unusual number, to a page. One of the curiosities of the Codex is that parts of it are written by the same scribe who wrote the Codex Vaticanus, so that, while there may be a difference in age in favour of the Vaticanus, it can only be slight. While the same hand wrote parts of both Codices, it is quite evident, however, that the writer was copying from different originals in the two cases, so that the testimony of each of the great manuscripts is independent. The age of Codex Sinaiticus cannot be before A.D. 340, and it is not likely that its date is much later than this.

The other two great Uncials must be mentioned briefly. The first also comes to us from the treasures of the Greek Church, having been presented to Charles I in 1628 by Cyril Lucar, Patriarch of Constantinople. One of the pieces of bad luck which befell our Authorised Version is that this fine early manuscript arrived in England just seventeen years too late to be used by King James's translators, to whom it would have been of the greatest value. The manuscript bears an inscription on the first sheet, which states that it was written "by the hand of Thekla the Martyr." It is nearly complete, as regards the Old Testament, only ten leaves being missing; but it has suffered more in the New Testament section, and has lost twenty-five leaves from the beginning of the Gospel of St. Matthew, two from St. John, and three from Corinthians. Its two columns to a page contrast with the three of the Vaticanus and the four of Sinaiticus. The Arabic note ascribing Codex A or Alexandrinus, as it is named, to Thekla the Martyr, would make it practically as old as either B or Aleph; but this age is not generally accepted, and authorities agree that it was probably written in the end of the fourth or beginning of the fifth century A.D.

The last of the great four is the Codex Ephraemi at Paris. It belongs to the class of MSS. known as "Palimpsests," or "Re-written" manuscripts. Vellum, of course, was costly, and often difficult to procure; so it was a frequent practice for a scribe who had a manuscript to write to take an older roll of vellum, containing another treatise, scrub out, so far as possible, the old writing, and proceed to write his new book on the surface thus obtained. It is scarcely needful to remark that often what he was obliterating was of far more value than the stuff which he was substituting for it. It was emphatically so in the case of Codex Ephraemi, for what was rubbed out was a considerable part of the Old and New Testaments, and what was substituted for this was the script of some theological discourses of an old Syrian Father named Ephraem, who was, no doubt, a most respect-

able man in his day, but whose old sermons were dearly bought at the cost of one of the oldest of our copies of Holy Scripture. Fortunately it has proved possible, by means of chemical treatment, to revive the ancient writing which was scrubbed to make room for Father Ephraem, and it now appears like a ghost beneath the darker script of the later scribe. Codex Ephraem is believed to be of much the same age as Codex Alexandrinus.

To the reader who has followed this short sketch of the form taken by the oldest copies of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, it may seem disappointing that we can come no nearer to the original writings than copies made, in the case of the Old Testament, not less than a thousand years after the Testament had assumed its final form, and, in that of the New Testament, nearly four hundred years after the death of Jesus Christ. Actually, however, we are in a far better position for arriving at an accurate text of the Bible, and especially of the New Testament, than we are with regard to any other writing of the ancient world. " Scholars are satisfied," says Sir F. G. Kenyon, " that they possess substantially the true text of the principal Greek and Roman writers whose works have come down to us, of Sophocles, of Thucydides, of Cicero, of Virgil, yet our knowledge of their writings depends on a mere handful of manuscripts, whereas the manuscripts of the New Testament are counted by hundreds, and even thousands. . . . The Christian can take the whole Bible in his hand and say without fear or hesitation that he holds in it the true Word of God, faithfully handed down from generation to generation throughout the centuries."

CHAPTER FOUR

Early Translations and The Great Revision—The Vulgate of St. Jerome

THE fact that Christianity, unlike Judaism, made a world-wide appeal, carried with it the corollary that it must also be a Missionary faith, and that, in its turn, the further necessity for the multiplication of translations of the books which embodied its essentials, truths, and ideals into the languages of the nations with whom it was called to deal. If in Christ Jesus there was to be " neither Jew nor Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free," then Christianity must be able to speak in the tongues of all these races whom she was to draw into unity under her great Founder. So long as the sacred writings were wrapped up in Greek and Hebrew, their mission could only be a limited one, in spite of the wide diffusion of a knowledge of the Greek language ; and the difficulty was bound to grow with every fresh extension of the missionary enterprise of the early Church to a new sphere. Accordingly the attempt was made to meet the needs of the Western nations temporarily by the translation of the Bible into Latin (the Old Latin version, originally created for the use of the Latin-using Church of North Africa) and to provide for the Eastern branches who did not use Greek by various Syriac versions.

These old versions have still a great value, for the text which they represent is often an older text than that offered by any of our extant MSS. Of these Syriac versions, the most famous is the " Peshitto " or " Simple " version, which

was probably made in the second or third century. Most of the extant copies of this famous version came to the British Museum in 1842, with the rest of the splendid collection of Syriac MSS. from the monastery of St. Mary Deipara, in the Egyptian desert. One of the British Museum Syriac manuscripts is the oldest copy of the Bible in any language of which the date is exactly known. This manuscript contains the four books, Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, and was written in A.D. 464.

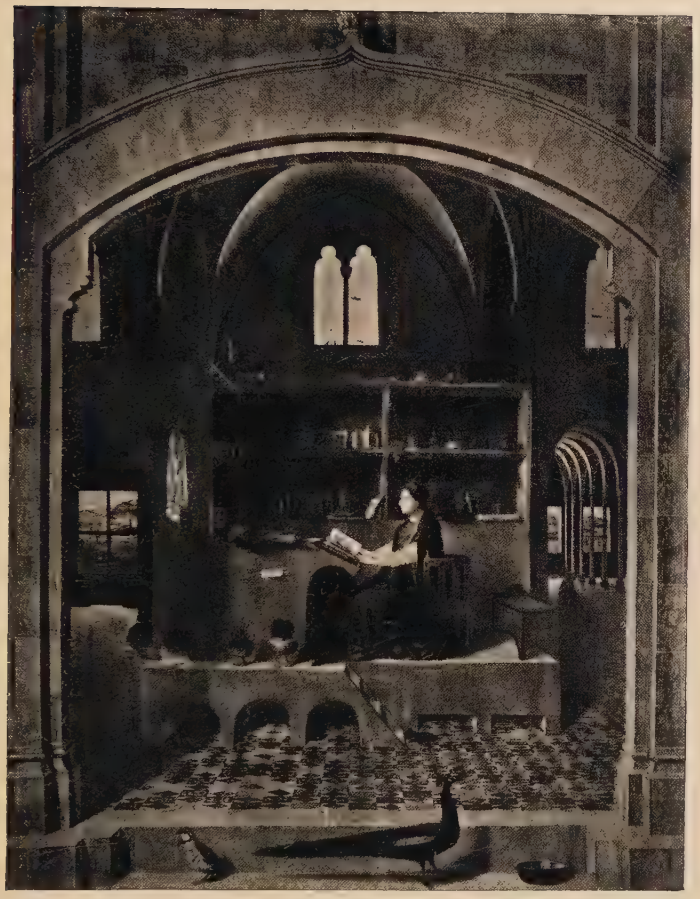
Fifty years after the arrival in England of these versions, Mrs. Gibson and Mrs. Lewis, two English sisters, while staying at the same monastery of St. Catharine on Mt. Sinai where Codex Sinaiticus was found, came upon a Palimpsest containing a still older Syriac version of the Gospels. In addition to the Old Latin and Syriac versions, the early Church produced a Coptic version for the Church in Egypt, an Armenian version for the Church in Armenia, an Ethiopic version for the Abyssinian Church, a Gothic version for the Goths of Moesia, and several other versions, which, however, are all later than the great central date which we are now approaching, and with whose contribution to the spread of the knowledge of the Bible we have now to deal. This is the "Vulgate," the most famous of all versions of Holy Scripture, and the most important to ourselves, apart from our own English Bible, because it was the version which was brought to our land by all the early missionaries of our faith, and on which all early Christian teaching in Britain was based.

It was about the year 382 that Pope Damasus, realising that a better version of the Bible than the Old Latin version then in use ought to be made, called upon the most capable Biblical scholar of the time to undertake a revision of the Latin text. Eusebius Hieronymus, who was thus called to an honourable, but very thorny task, and whom we know better as St. Jerome, had spent a good part of his life as a hermit in the desert, where, like Androcles, he acquired the friendship of the lion who is always painted as following or

lying beside him, by taking a thorn out of its foot. At this time he was living in a cave at Bethlehem, close to the legendary cave of the Saviour's birthplace. This cave was his home for thirty-four years, and it was in it that much of his great work upon the Scriptures was done. Eight years before the Pope summoned him to the task of revision, he had set himself, under the teaching of a converted Jew, to learn Hebrew—an accomplishment then very rare among Western scholars; and his knowledge of the original language was to prove eventually of great importance in his work, though it was not brought into play at the beginning of it. For what Pope Damasus contemplated was nothing so radical as a new translation from the original tongues, but simply a revision of the Old Latin version, which was itself, both in the Old Testament and the New, a translation from the Greek.

The first part of the work to be attacked was, naturally, the Gospels, and in his revision of them, Jerome wisely proceeded with great caution, realising the force of the prejudices which would be aroused by any drastic handling of the text. Alterations were only made where absolutely necessary, and many minor corrections were omitted in order that the shock to the susceptibilities of the weaker brethren might be as slight as possible. The revision of the Gospels was completed in A.D. 384, and that of the rest of the New Testament, accomplished in the same cautious manner, in the following year. In consequence of this conservatism, the New Testament section of St. Jerome's work is scarcely of the same importance as his revision of the Old Testament, and his evidence for the state of the text is less important than that of the earlier versions; still we must remember that the authorities which he used must have been at least as old as the oldest manuscripts of the New Testament which are now extant, however cautiously he may have used them.

Simultaneously with his revision of the New Testament, Jerome was carrying on a revision of the Psalter. Of this he eventually produced three versions. The first was executed



ST. JEROME IN HIS STUDY

It is quite certain that the great Translator never worked in such luxury in his life ; but Antonello da Messina's priceless picture gives a beautiful rendering of a Renaissance ecclesiastic and his surroundings.

on the same principle as his revision of the New Testament, and was merely a revision of the Old Latin text, with references to the Septuagint. The result, still known as the Roman Psalter, was officially adopted by Pope Damasus, and is still used in St. Peter's at Rome. The second revision was somewhat more thorough, though it still only dealt with the Old Latin and the Septuagint; for Jerome now used the Hebrew text of Origen's *Hexapla* for purposes of comparison. This version, known as the Gallican Psalter, is that generally used in the Roman Catholic Church and Bible to the present day. Finally Jerome produced his third version, which was a direct translation from the Hebrew, and was of much superior accuracy. This, however, never attained to anything like the same popularity as the earlier and inferior versions. Thus Jerome's labours on the Psalter have resulted in the curious paradox that the nearer one goes to the seat of the central authority of the Church which commissioned his revision, the worse is the version of his work which is found in use; while the best fruit of his toil is least used.

As Jerome progressed with his work on the Old Testament, he quite naturally grew more and more dissatisfied with any rendering which did not go direct to the fountain-head in the original Hebrew. Consequently he carried out the rest of his revision on the same lines as those of his third revision of the Psalter, and made an entirely new translation from the Hebrew. This colossal work occupied him for about fourteen years, from 390 to 404, separate books or groups of books being published as they were completed. First came the books of Samuel and Kings, then the Prophets, lastly, the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, and Esther. Jerome wished to exclude the Apocryphal books from his great work, and only reluctantly consented to make a hurried revision of Judith and Tobit. In spite of the protest of its greatest scholar, however, the Church persisted in retaining the books, in their unrevised Old Latin form. Thus, in the end, the Bible which became current was a curious composite,

made up partly of quite unrevised translations from the Greek, partly of Jerome's revised translations from the Greek, and partly of his translations from the Hebrew. In later days, when it had won general acceptance in Western Europe, this composite volume came to be known as the "Vulgate," or generally received version. It was, of course, the Bible of the British Church till the Reformation, and is still the Bible of the Roman Church.

Like most great benefactors of their kind, Jerome got small thanks and much abuse for his stupendous piece of work—a wonderful bit of work for any man to accomplish. His revision finally succeeded in establishing itself in the favour of the Church so surely as to become in its turn, by the irony of fate, one of the greatest obstacles to the attainment of a still better translation. It seemed, and seems still to many, almost sacrilege to alter by one jot or tittle words consecrated by so many centuries of usage, and originating in the labours of a man so holy. But this is a position which Jerome himself would have repudiated with bitter scorn. For it is an argument with which he was perfectly familiar in his own day. "Revolutionary" and "heretical" were among the mildest of the epithets which were hurled at his work. It was denounced as an impious laying of sacrilegious hands upon the Ark of God. In fact, all the arguments with which stupidity in all ages attempts to resist reform were employed against Jerome, with that peculiar virulence which theological controversy, above all other forms of strife, seems to engender.

Jerome might be a hermit, and therefore, presumably, detached from the world; but his detachment had not reached the stage of being able to suffer fools gladly, and he responded to the attacks of ignorance and spite with refreshing vigour. "Two-legged donkeys," he calls his critics in one of his letters. "I could afford to despise them, if I stood upon my rights; for a lyre is played in vain to an ass. If they do not like the water from the pure fountain-head, let them drink of the muddy streams." One can forgive the

irate saint his profusion of metaphors in joy at the sight of seeing blockheads (however saintly), handled as they deserve. When the famous Complutensian Polyglot of Cardinal Ximenes was published in 1514–1517, with the Hebrew text in one column, the Greek in another, and the Vulgate in the middle, the editors in their Preface compared the position of the sacred version of St. Jerome to that of Jesus Christ between the two thieves at the Crucifixion! The wheel had indeed come full circle round. One commentator on this amazing comparison talks about its "grim humour." One would like to have heard Jerome himself expressing his opinion of such humour.

We need not wonder, however, either at the prejudice which condemned St. Jerome's noble labours, or at that which, centuries after, made, in the Council of Trent and elsewhere, a fetish of work of which the great scholar would have been the first to admit the imperfections; we have seen the same stupidity at work in our own time, whenever any attempt has been made to get behind the merely good to the better and the best, and the future will no doubt witness many repetitions of the edifying performance. "Against stupidity even the gods fight unvictorious," and the curate who said that if the Authorised Version was good enough for St. Paul it was good enough for him has left successors in the Church.

Innumerable manuscripts of St. Jerome's precious work came into existence, as the text, after its gradual adoption by the Church, was copied repeatedly in every scriptorium throughout Europe. Probably at least eight thousand MSS., possibly more, exist at the present time, of which by far the greater number have never been fully examined. The finest known copy, the Codex Amiatinus, in the famous Laurentian Library at Florence, has a special connection with our subject, for it was written in England at the beginning of the eighth century. It bears an inscription stating that it was presented to the abbey of Monte Amiata (whence its title) by Peter of Lombardy; but Peter's name has been written over an

erasure, and it has been found out that the manuscript was actually written either at Wearmouth or Jarrow, both of them famous schools of learning in the seventh and eighth centuries, and was taken to Rome by Abbot Ceolfrid as a present to Pope Gregory II, in 716. The great volume, of which each leaf measures nineteen and a half by thirteen and a half inches, is regarded by scholars as the most important authority for the text of the Vulgate. Later we shall hear the story of another famous English version, "The Lindisfarne Gospels," written at Lindisfarne a little earlier than the great Codex Amiatinus. The existence of such great manuscripts, made in our own land, emphasises for us the fact that it was the version of St. Jerome which was the foundation of our own English Bible; we shall see, in the sequel, how it was also in England, as elsewhere, the greatest hindrance to the development of a more perfect translation.

BOOK TWO

THE BIBLE IN ENGLAND—THE MIDDLE AGES

CHAPTER FIVE

Early England and Christianity

THE story of the English Bible may most fittingly begin with the meeting in Northern England of the two great currents of missionary effort which made Britain in the end a Christian land. Christianity, of course, was of much earlier date in these islands than St. Columba's coming to Iona, or St. Augustine's mission to Kent; for it reached our shores as early as the second century, and within the next two and a half centuries had already given to the Church famous martyrs, like St. Alban, and one of the most famous of heretics in the person of Pelagius, whose erroneous teachings called forth the utmost powers of St. Jerome and the greater St. Augustine (of Hippo) for their refutation. The early Christianity of Britain, however, passed into temporary eclipse before the inroads of the heathen Saxons; and though it maintained itself among the Britons who had been driven westwards before the invaders, British Christianity would never have Christianised the islands again, for the Welsh hated the Saxons too bitterly to make any effort towards their conversion, and, indeed, allied themselves with the heathen King Penda of Mercia against the Christians of Northumbria, whom they treated with a barbarity far exceeding that of Penda's heathen followers.

It was in 563 that St. Columba founded the monastery

of Iona. Thirty-four years later, in 597, Augustine, sent from Rome by Gregory the Great, landed in Kent, and began the Christianisation of the land from the south-east, as Columba was beginning it from the north-west. The two great currents of missionary effort which thus began to act upon Britain, and which were destined to clash against one another in Northumbria, were of markedly different types. Augustine represented the current Roman tradition, in all its force of closely-knit organisation under a single head; Columba, on the other hand, was the embodiment of the freer and more individualistic type of Christianity into which the church founded by St. Patrick in Ireland had developed since his death. Ere long, Augustine, by his arrogant insistence upon the mechanical uniformity which is so dear to Rome, had effectually banged and bolted the door between the Christianity of his mission and that of the Western Britons, and it is impossible to read Bede's account of the conference at which the breach occurred without sympathising with the simple British bishops whom the proud Roman bullied so unmercifully. His successors were to follow a similar course sixty years after his death, at the Council of Whitby, and the triumph of Rome meant the gradual withering and final extinction of the Columban Church, with all its gentle piety and freedom for spiritual development.

Meanwhile, however, the two missionary influences were at work, each within its own chosen sphere, at opposite corners of the land, with no premonition of the struggle which was to follow, and to prove fatal to one of them. Augustine did not convert England, though he is often credited with such an accomplishment. "He converted Kent, founded the See of Canterbury, and made it the solid base for the subsequent spread of Roman Christianity over the island. Outside Kent progress was at first slow." His singularly tactless handling of the Welsh bishops made it not only slow, but impossible in the West. London remained pagan—a fact which upset Gregory's scheme for making London the Metropolitan See of the island, and explains why

Canterbury, and not London, is to this day the seat of the Primate of all England. Those who read the extraordinary series of questions which the missionary of Britain addressed to Pope Gregory, and realise the amazing preoccupation with material things and pitiful minutiæ which they reveal, will wonder less at his alienation of the Welsh clergy, and will be more inclined to marvel afresh at the inherent power of a Gospel, which, even in such hands, could accomplish what it did. The outstanding success of his mission did not come until twenty-three years after his death ; and altogether his work has received a great deal more of praise than will seem to be due to it on a candid consideration of the facts.

" A few years after Augustine's death," says Sir Charles Oman, " we find Archbishop Laurentius, his successor, complaining that an Irish bishop, one Dagan, refused when passing through Canterbury not only to eat with him, but even to enter the same dwelling. Three generations later St. Aldhelm records that the priests of the Welsh not only refused to join in any act of worship with an English cleric, but regarded him as so deeply polluted that they would not use a dish or cup which he had touched, but would break it, or at least solemnly purify it with ashes or sand, and cast any food partly eaten by him to dogs or swine. The English retorted by treating all British or Irish bishops as schismatic, and called the peculiar Celtic tonsure, in which the whole front of the head instead of the crown alone was shorn, 'the tonsure of Simon Magus.'" It is difficult to believe that such bitterness between the disciples of Him Who said " One is your Master, and all ye are brethren," need ever have arisen had the first Apostle of Christianity to Southern Britain only possessed a little more of common sense and of Christian charity, and a little less of pride.

The great success of the Roman mission, already alluded to, came in A.D. 627, with the conversion of Edwin of Northumbria and his realm to the Christian faith. Edwin, the rising king of the time, who had already begun to add to his own kingdom of Deira a kind of suzerainty over several

other states, sent to King Eadbald of Kent to ask his sister Aethelberga in marriage. Eadbald's answer to a request which must otherwise have been most satisfactory to him was—"That it was not lawful to marry a Christian virgin to a pagan husband, lest the faith and the mysteries of the heavenly king should be profaned by her cohabiting with a king that was altogether a stranger to the worship of the true God." Edwin, who may not have been altogether unprepared for such an answer, and who had been already, according to Bede, forewarned by a vision of the changes which had brought him to the throne and would require further changes on his own part, replied that he was quite willing to allow Aethelberga all liberty in the exercise of her faith, and to extend the same liberty to all her train. He further indicated that if, on examination, he found the Christian faith to be what was claimed for it, he might be not unwilling to embrace it himself.

Aethelberga was therefore married to the Northumbrian king, and was accompanied to her northern home by Paulinus, one of the Roman missionaries, who was consecrated bishop before he set out, with a view to possible eventualities. For some time his work was apparently without result; but the escape of King Edwin from the dagger of an assassin, and the birth of a daughter to him and his young wife, both events skilfully used by Paulinus as evidences of the advantage of having a Christian bishop at hand, inclined the king to accept the new faith. At last, when Paulinus had manifested that he knew of the previous vision to which allusion has been made, the king regarded as miraculous a piece of knowledge which was capable of a very much simpler explanation, and agreed to refer the whole matter to a conference of his counsellors.

The council speedily revealed the extent to which Paulinus's methods of peaceful penetration had been influencing the minds of the Northumbrian nobles. The slump from paganism was initiated at once by the pagan high-priest Coifi, whose speech was an amusing example of the practical

frame of mind of a typical Gallio, who cared for none of these things, but was ready to accept any faith which offered temporal advantages. "O king," said this business-like pagan, "consider what this is which is now preached to us; for I verily declare to you, that the religion which we have hitherto professed has, as far as I can learn, no virtue in it. For none of your people has applied himself more diligently to the worship of our gods than I; and yet there are many who receive greater favours than I from you, and are more preferred than I, and are more prosperous in all their undertakings. Now if the gods were good for anything, they would rather forward me, who have been more careful to serve them. It remains, therefore, that if upon examination you find those new doctrines which are now preached to us better and more efficacious, we immediately receive them without any delay."

The priest, as so often happens, had dragged down the whole business to a matter of profit and loss; it was left to a layman to lift the discussion to a higher plane by that solemn and beautiful apologue which, I suppose, has been more often quoted than any utterance on religion of the Middle Ages, but which yet never loses the power of its appeal. "The present life of man," said this grave old pagan, surely a far truer type of the serious Englishman than the worldly-minded Coifi, "seems to me, O king, when we put it side by side in thought with the life which is unknown to us, like the quick flight of a sparrow through the hall when you sit at supper in the winter-tide, with your Aldermen and Thegns, when a good fire is burning in the midst upon the hearth, but without are the storms of rain and snow. Then the sparrow, flying in at one door and immediately out at another, is safe from the wintry tempest as long as he is within; but after this short tide of pleasant weather he vanishes out of your sight into the dark winter whence he had come. So is it with the life of man. It is seen only for a moment, but of what went before it, and of what cometh after it we know nothing at all. If, therefore,

this new teaching tells us anything more sure concerning it, it seems to be right to follow its law." Bede ascribes the speech to Divine inspiration; at least we may regard it as manifesting beyond question that the Gospel had no ignoble material to work upon in our forefathers.

Coifi, the practical man, brings things to a point. "I should like," he said, "to hear Paulinus." And when he has heard the missionary, he sums up the whole business in three sentences. "I have long thought that all we worshipped was naught, for the more I sought for truth in that religion the less I found it. But in this preaching I find the gift of life and happiness for ever. So my counsel is that we burn down those temples and altars which we hallowed of old, but out of which we have got no good." One may doubt whether this pinchbeck Jacob was likely ever to make a better Christian than he had made a pagan; but at least he had the courage of what he was pleased to call his convictions. "Who will profane the altars and temples?" asked the king. "I," cried Coifi; "for who can more properly than myself destroy those things which I worshipped through ignorance, for an example to others, through the wisdom which has been given me by the true God?"

So, borrowing the king's stallion, though such a mount was forbidden to a priest, and brandishing spear and sword, both also forbidden, he rode foremost to the temple where he had once ministered, and, hurling his spear into its wall, bade his companions set fire to the place. "The high priest, by the inspiration of the true God," says the devout Bede, "profaned and destroyed the altars which he had himself consecrated." One may doubt the source of Coifi's inspiration, when compared with the grave sincerity of his lay fellow-counsellor, and question whether he were not more inspired by the cult of the jumping cat; but at all events his intervention was effective. Like a wise man, Paulinus appears to have said nothing; though one wonders what he thought of Coifi and his antics.

The scene at Godmundingham was followed by wholesale

conversions and baptisms; and after a while Paulinus ventured still further afield, and began to carry the Gospel into East Anglia. It is from the recollection of one of his converts of this mission that we get the picture of this great apostle of England in Bede's pages. "He was also wont to describe the person of the same Paulinus," says Bede, "that he was tall of stature, a little stooping, his hair black, his visage meagre, his nose slender and aquiline, his aspect both venerable and majestic." Under the new impulse of his new faith, Edwin made himself for a time the most dreaded and respected king in Britain, and under his dominion there was such perfect peace in the land that "a woman with her new-born babe might walk throughout the island, from sea to sea, without receiving any harm." It is apparently in the time of expansion, subsequent to his conversion, that we are to place Edwin's building, on the great rock near to the Firth of Forth, of the strong castle of "Edwin's Burgh," which was destined to be the most famous, and the most lasting of all his accomplishments.

Indeed, the rest of his work was destined to speedy eclipse. Penda of Mercia, the most famous of the heathen kings, allied himself with the Welsh Christian king Cadwallon, and Edwin, attempting to deal with this unholy alliance, was utterly defeated and slain at Heathfield, near Doncaster (October 12th, 633). This disaster meant the temporary extinction of Christianity in Northumbria. Aethelberga fled for her life to her native Kent, and with her went Paulinus, who was now archbishop, having received the pallium from Pope Honorius. The poor Christians of Northumbria, thus deserted by their leaders, both secular and religious, were mercilessly harried by their foes, of whom the Christian Cadwallon showed himself far more cruel than his pagan ally. "He neither spared the female sex, nor the innocent age of children, but with savage cruelty put them to tormenting deaths, ravaging their country for a long time, and resolving to cut off all the race of the English within the borders of Britain." In such circumstances, it is scarcely

surprising that the new-found faith of the Northumbrians failed to stand the test, and that the short-lived kings, Osric and Eanfrid, who succeeded Edwin, reverted to paganism. On Coifi's principle (one wonders what had become of the old time-server) they were quite justified in so doing; but paganism had no better luck than Christianity, and it was not till the Christian Oswald routed and slew Cadwallon at Deniseburn, near Hexham, that Northumbria began to recover.

When the curtain rises again on the drama of the progress of Christianity, Iona is occupying the field from which Rome had fled after the disaster of Heathfield. Oswald, during his time of exile, had been kindly treated by the Columban Christians of Scotland, and had received baptism at the hands of a Columban bishop; it was not unnatural, therefore, that, instead of recalling the Roman teachers, who had fled in the time of trial, he should have recourse to Iona. The first missionary who was sent proved too austere and unbending for the rude, half-civilised Northumbrians, and Cormac returned in despair, with the report that he could make nothing of the men of his charge, because "they were of a stubborn and barbarous disposition." Aidan, who suggested that perhaps Cormac had dealt too severely with uninstructed men, was chosen to take his place; and the choice was crowned by unqualified success.

Aidan's gentleness won the Northumbrians, where Cormac's severity had repelled them, and his mission, says Sir Charles Oman, "seems to have bitten more deep into Northumbria than that which had started from Kent." Aidan was of the true Columban type which held that

> "He prayeth best who loveth best
> All things, both great and small,"

and though some of the legends regarding him are almost ludicrous, rather than edifying, even these reveal a singularly gentle character, of a wonderful charm; while it is evident that his gentleness was by no means coupled with the least

weakness. The bishop who could rebuke a warlike king as Aidan rebuked King Oswald—"What is it you say, O King? Is that foal of a mare more dear to you than a son of God?"—was neither a fool nor a weakling. Accordingly the Christianity which he fostered took deep hold upon the land. Monasteries were established in various centres, often presided over by some member of the royal house, as was the case with the great Abbey of Streaneshalch (Whitby) where the Princess Hild ruled, and from which came forth Caedmon, whom we shall meet in our next chapter as the first giver of the Word of God to his people in their own tongue, and with that of Coldingham, whose foundress was the Princess Ebba, sister of King Oswald. Even the defeat and death of Oswald at the hands of the stubborn old pagan Penda did not mean a relapse into paganism such as had marked the previous overthrow when Edwin fell. Oswin and Oswy, who succeeded Oswald, maintained their devotion to the Christian faith, though the Christianity of Oswy, at all events, was of that convenient sort which did not hinder him from murdering Oswin when he fell into his hands.

But the time was coming when the gentle and evangelical faith of the Columban Church was to be brought into conflict with the arrogant demand of the Roman Church for submission in all matters to its practice; and the Columbans were ill-fitted to withstand the iron self-assertion of Rome and its champions. Rome had deserted the Christians of Northumbria when misfortune fell upon them, and for thirty years the light of Christianity had been kept burning by the efforts of men like Aidan and Finan; but now that Oswy's victories had made it safe once more to be a Christian in Northumbria, the advocates of Roman supremacy returned, and at once began to use their court influence to thrust out the men who had kept the land Christian in their absence. Oswy was himself of the Columban Church; but his queen Eanflaed, the daughter of Edwin, had not only been baptised by Paulinus, but had been reared in Kent, and was therefore under the influence of the Roman order; while she trained

the prince Alchfrid to despise his father's form of Christianity.

The result was that poor Oswy, worried to death by ecclesiastical dissensions in his family and court, summoned a Synod at Whitby to consider the question of whether the Columban or the Roman order should be followed. The matters in dispute were such as to make one wonder how a Christianity which quarrelled over such things ever succeeded at all in Christianising Britain. The supreme question was that of the true date on which Easter should be observed! while a secondary matter, which was apparently also regarded as of considerable importance, was that of how priests should have their heads shaven. On such points the champions of the supremacy judged it worthy of their Master to crush out of existence a type of Christianity which had given its credentials by carrying on successfully the work from which the Roman missionaries had run away in time of danger. The final decision of the king was given on lines worthy of the high-priest Coifi. Wilfred, the chief of the Roman representatives, concluded his argument as usual by the assertion of the power of the keys—whereon King Oswy summed up the matter in these terms—"Since Peter is the door-keeper, him I will not contradict, but will, as far as I know and am able, in all things obey his decrees, lest, when I come to the gates of the kingdom of heaven, there should be none to open them, he being my adversary who is proved to have the keys."

Not unnaturally, the Columban clergy, who had done the work when their opponents had shirked it, and were now to be humiliated for the greater glory of Rome, refused to submit to the Roman order thus imposed upon them, and Colman, the bishop of Lindisfarne, returned to his native land, with the bulk of his clergy, though Cedd submitted to Roman discipline and was followed by the English priests of Northumbria. On the whole, whatever may be our opinion of the methods by which Rome asserted her supremacy, and the trivialities over which she saw fit to display a

spirit of arrogance essentially unchristian, it may be admitted that for the time the adherence of the young English Church to the Roman rather than to the Columban order was a benefit to the land. Columbanism was always weak precisely where Rome was strong—in the instinct for order and organisation. Saintly as were many of the Columban bishops (and even Bede, whose prejudices are all in the other direction, is full of admiration for the Christian graces and virtues of such a man as Aidan), their organisation was far too local and tribal to be suited for the needs of England at this stage of her history. The country was not to be unified by men, never so holy though they might be, whose whole ideal of religion was bounded by tribal limitations, and whose Church was a series of disconnected units. What was required was a great centralised religious authority, whose discipline and example should draw the nation to imitate it. England had suffered, and was still to suffer enough from disunion; it was better that in her Church, at all events, there should be union and uniformity, even though this had to be bought, as it undoubtedly had, by the sacrifice of some elements in which the Columban Church was markedly superior to the Roman.

This gain, however, though it may be admitted to have been of paramount importance for the time being, had to be paid for in the end by something much more serious than the withering of the Church of Iona. "The decision of Whitby contained the seeds of all the trouble with Rome, down the ages to come," says Trevelyan, and Oman is not less emphatic. "The connection with the Papacy was fraught with dangers and difficulties in the future. . . . but for the present the advantages of the decision made at Whitby were clear and decisive." The shade of Coifi must have grinned as he listened to King Oswy making his momentous decision on lines exactly similar to those on which the high-priest had settled for himself the question between Christianity and paganism; but even Coifi may have questioned at last the wisdom of the decision, when the intolerable arrogance of

Rome forced the bitter strife between Church and State which culminated, after so many furious battles, in the Reformation. "Christian leaders of the new type," says Trevelyan, "by becoming statesmen and great prelates, did England yeoman's service. But the change put them in no small danger of becoming hard-faced officials, territorialists, greedy above all things of lands and power for the Church." That such a judgment is even too mild a statement of the truth may best be seen when we remember that one outstanding result of the Whitby decision was to give us as typical Churchmen such men as Becket and Wolsey, in place of such as Aidan and Cuthbert.

CHAPTER SIX

The Bible and the Saxon Folk

HERE then, we have a Church firmly established in England, recognised as the Church of the land, and becoming more and more completely so with the gradual decay of paganism and the withering of the Columban Church. Incidentally it may be worth while to notice how gradual and how slow was this decay of paganism. The work of modern missions is often criticised on the ground of the slowness of its progress. Critics who use such an argument may be invited to consider the facts of the Christianising of our land (or rather its partial re-Christianising, for there were parts of the land which never ceased to be Christian, even during the pagan reaction). St. Columba began his work in A.D. 563, and St. Augustine his in 597. In 681 there were still seven thousand pagan families among the South Saxons, and it was not till 686 that the Jutes of the Isle of Wight were handed over to Wilfred to be evangelised after Caedwalla of Wessex had conquered them. Allowing Wilfred a reasonable time for his work (though indeed his methods were apt to be summary), the conversion of England may be said to have occupied almost exactly a century, reckoning from the landing of Augustine, or a century and a third, counting from the landing of Columba.

One of the most remarkable facts which strikes the mind with regard to this Church, from the point of view of our study, is that it has no sacred book to offer to the common folk in their own tongue. The first gift which was given to

the Church of Christ after His Ascension was the "gift of tongues," so that men of every race might hear the Apostles speak in their own tongue the wonderful works of God; and the first task of a Christian mission to any pagan land in our own day is the preparation of a version of the Scripture in the local speech. The earliest Church, as we have seen, realised its duty in this respect, as is evidenced by the number of versions of Scripture extant in the languages of the nations to whom the missionaries of the Cross bore the Gospel. Yet the Church in England, its authority undisputed from 664, and complete from 686, makes no organised effort for many centuries to supply its members with a version which they could read, or at least could have read to them, of those Scriptures on which the Church's faith is founded, and it is not till the close of the fourteenth century that such a version is produced by individual effort, to be frowned on and discouraged in every possible way by the ecclesiastical authorities of the time.

The extraordinary nature of the fact is not lessened but rather increased by the consideration that such a state of affairs was not confined to England, but was characteristic of every land where the influence of the Roman Church extended. Not a single race in Europe possessed a vernacular Bible. The Goths, indeed, had their native version from the fourth century; but Ulfilas, the bishop who gave it to them, belonged, not to the Roman, but to the Eastern Church. Nor can it be said that in this neglect of what might seem the most manifest duty, the Church, which laid such stress upon the traditions of the fathers, was following patristic example. "To the early Fathers, to St. Chrysostom or Origen, to Augustine or Jerome, could they have come back to life, it would have seemed a reproach to Christianity that a nation of Teutonic speech should remain restricted to a Latin Bible."

Attempts to apologise for what seems an obvious blot upon the work of the Church in England have been many and various. The main foundation of all apologies, however,

is the same—namely that there was no demand for a vernacular Bible from below, for the simple reason that there was no reading public to profit by it. One must confess that it is difficult to take such an argument seriously. If it were a valid one, it must have applied equally, to say the least, to many of the peoples for whom the versions of the early Church were created; while, the more absolute its validity, the greater the reproach which lies upon the Church, which, professedly the instructor of the people, allowed such a state of ignorance to exist and continue without taking what should seem the most obvious step to dispel it.

But the argument is not valid. For the period with which we are now dealing is precisely the period of one of the most remarkable outbursts of English literary activity. That there was a public which craved for intellectual and spiritual nourishment, whether through the medium of individual reading, or through that of reading or recitation by one who had himself been instructed in the vernacular literature, is manifest from the very existence of the great monuments of early English Literature, both secular and sacred. It is asking too much of human credulity to require us to believe that the people who listened to the paraphrases of Caedmon and his school would not have listened, with even greater eagerness, to the words of Him Who spake as never man spake, rendered to them in their own kindly mother-tongue. "How are we to explain the fact, that, although for at least a hundred years before the coming of the destroying Danes, English literature flourished so vigorously in the North, and although it revived again, in the form of prose, with King Alfred in the South, yet no English Bible appeared before Wycliffe, and no English Liturgy before Cranmer?"

The answer to such a question is not far to seek. It is simply this, that already the Church was committed to the fatal policy of maintaining Roman supremacy at all costs, and, as a necessary instrument of this policy, viewed the Bible as a treasure to be kept in its own exclusive charge, reserved to its clergy by the fact of its being in a learned

tongue, and to be by them only doled out to the laity in such portions as they should see fit to administer. "The Church," it is said, "was not ripe for a vernacular Bible." To such an argument the obvious answer is that the only thing which will ever ripen any Church for a vernacular Bible is the possession of such a Bible. In every age, it has been proved that the possession of the sources of truth is the greatest intellectual and spiritualising influence; while the withholding of them means barrenness, mental and spiritual. King Alfred, writing to the bishops to whom he sent new copies of his translation of Gregory's *Pastoral Care*, draws a dark picture of the state of ignorance into which his kingdom had fallen. "But so clean fallen away was learning now in the Angle race that there were very few on this side Humber who would know how to render their service book into English, or to read off an epistle out of Latin into English, and I ween there would not be many on the other side of Humber. So few of them there were that I cannot think of a single one South of Thames when I took to the realm." But the great king did not think that such ignorance was any excuse for its own continuance. He gave to his people translation after translation, the *Pastoral Care*, already mentioned, Boethius, Orosius, and Bede, while at his death he was engaged on a translation of the Psalter. The Church surely need not have found that impossible in the case of the Scriptures which Alfred judged to be of the first importance, and executed for more secular writings. But the Church differed from Alfred, and preferred to keep its treasure wrapped up in a napkin, and to say, "this people, who knoweth not the law, are cursed." The results of its fatal policy are manifest on the face of history.

In spite, however, of the official attitude of the Church towards a vernacular Bible, it was inevitable that there should be attempts to give the substance of the Gospels and other parts of Scripture to the common folk in their own tongue; and it was out of such attempts that the first native literature

of our land began to grow up in Northumbria, not long after the Synod of Whitby had settled that the Roman Church was to be supreme in England. The paraphrase of Caedmon may legitimately be regarded as the first remote ancestor of our English Bible, and is to be held in reverence, not only as the first shoot of the great tree of English Literature, but as actually the only Bible of our Anglo-Saxon forefathers.

In one sense it was curious that Caedmon should come from Whitby, where the individualism of Iona had been crushed by the centralism of Rome; but in another it was only natural. For the Abbess of the great Abbey of Streaneshalch was the Princess Hild or Hilda, who, though she had herself been baptised by Paulinus, the apostle of Rome to Northumbria, sided, as Bede tells us, with the Columban bishops in the controversy. The great abbey stood high on the cliff where the abbey church of Whitby stands at the present day; though the present ruins hold nothing of the structure over which Hilda ruled, and where Caedmon served. We owe the story of how the poet was called to his work to Bede, who was a child when Caedmon died, and must often have heard the tale from the lips of men who had talked with the lay-brother who was called, like David, from his herding to a throne, and sang the first beginning of created things. Well known as Bede's story is, and fabulous though some of the elements may be which have entered into it, it cannot be omitted in any account of the growth of our Bible.

Caedmon, Bede tells us, had "lived in a secular habit," by which he may mean either than he was a lay-brother in the monastery, or that he was merely employed in labour about it, till he was well advanced in years. He had no idea of his possession of the gift of song: so much to the contrary indeed, that when the harp went round the table at night, and our music-loving ancestors sang, each in turn, the rude alliterative impromptus which were then in vogue, he used to rise and leave the room, so as to avoid having to confess

his inability to take his part in the entertainment. He had done this one night, and had gone out to the stable, where it was his duty that night to attend to the horses, and after finishing his work, he lay down and fell asleep. As he slept he dreamed that some one came to him, and said, "Caedmon, sing to me." "I cannot sing," he answered ruefully, "and for that very reason I have left the feast and come hither." "Yet you shall sing," the voice said again; and when he asked, "What shall I sing?" the answer came—"Sing the beginning of created things." So the mute poet began to sing, in words that he had never heard before, to the praise of God.—"The sense of his words," says Bede, "is as follows —'Now let us praise the guardian of the heavenly kingdom, the power of the Creator and the counsel of His mind, the works of the Father of Glory; how He, the eternal Lord, originated every marvel. He, the holy Creator, first created the heaven as a roof for the children of the earth; then the eternal Lord, guardian of the human race, the almighty Ruler, afterwards fashioned the world as a soil for men.'"

Waking from his dream, he found the verses that he had sung still lingering in his mind, and when he had told his strange experience to the steward of the monastery, he was conducted to the Abbess Hilda. There, before the princess and "many learned men," he recounted his dream, and recited the verses which had been given him in his sleep. Another portion of Scripture was read and explained to him, and he was bidden put the same into verse, if he could. Next morning he produced the passage, paraphrased into "most excellent verse;" whereupon his gift was at once recognised as divine, and he was encouraged in the full exercise of it. The Abbess advised him to lay aside his secular habit, and become a monk; and in the shelter of the great monastery he continued to learn, and to reproduce in Anglo-Saxon verse the Bible truths concerning God and man.

"All that he could learn by listening he pondered in his heart, and chewing the cud, like some clean beast, he turned

it into the sweetest of songs. His song and his music were so delightful to hear that even his teachers wrote down the words from his lips and learnt them. He sang first of the earth's creation and the beginning of man and all the story of Genesis, which is the first book of Moses ; and afterwards about the departure of the people of Israel from the land of Egypt and their entry into the land of promise ; and about Christ's incarnation and His passion and His ascension into heaven, and about the coming of the Holy Ghost and the teaching of the apostles ; and again about the day of judgment to come, and about the terror of hell torment, and about the kingdom of heaven, he composed many a song. And he also composed many others about the divine blessings and judgments."

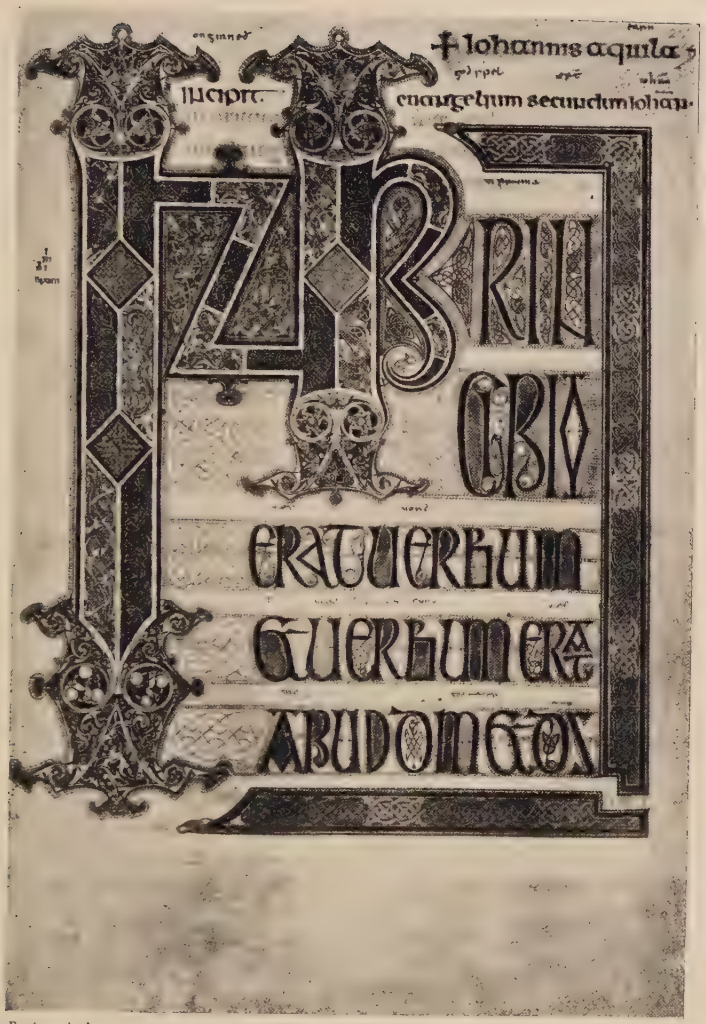
Judging by Bede's summary, the work of this heaven-sent poet must have covered pretty well the whole range of Bible teaching ; and it is the more to be deplored that, in the opinion of modern criticism, scarcely one single line of his actual work survives. The most that can be said is that in the precious manuscript which was discovered by Archbishop Ussher, and published in 1655 by Francis Dujon of Leyden, from whose Latinised name it is known as the Junian Caedmon, we have a number of pieces which are of the same kind as those attributed by Bede to Caedmon, and which are the product of the school of sacred poetry which his work initiated. A few lines from Stopford Brooke's translation will show the style of these first efforts to give the Bible to the English folk in their own tongue :

" Nor was here as yet, save a hollow shadow,
Anything created ; but the wide abyss
Deep and dim, outspread, all divided from the Lord,
Idle and unuseful. With His eyes upon it
Gazed the mighty-minded King and He marked the place
Lie delightless— (looked and) saw the cloud
Brooding black in Ever-night, swart beneath the heaven,
Wan and wasteful all, till the world became."

One of the interesting features of the Caedmon Cycle is

the development of that strange legend of the strife in Heaven between the Son of God and the rebel angels which ultimately found such a prominent place in Milton's great poem. Milton was a friend of the Dutch editor of the Junian Caedmon, and there is no doubt that he saw the book when Dujon returned to England after the publication of his edition of the manuscript. But, though Milton may have got a suggestion from the early poem, it is possible to lay too much stress on resemblances which, after all, are not of great importance. Some of the passages are thoroughly characteristic of our ancestors' delight in battle. "The Abraham of Hebrew history will be found figuring in battle as a genuine Saxon Aetheling, while the Israelites themselves fight with all the savage fierceness of the hosts of Penda."

"Others after Caedmon," says Bede, "attempted in the English nation, to compose religious poems, but none could ever compare with him, for he did not learn the art of poetry from men, but from God." Caedmon's most famous successor, Cynewulf, had apparently a very different training from the earlier poet. We have no information from any external authority regarding him; but it is possible to infer from his poems that he was by profession a poet, "probably the thegn or scop of some great lord, and not merely an itinerant singer or gleeman, as some critics have held," and that he was a man of some learning, certainly a good Latin scholar. The most important of the poems attributed to him, the *Elene* and *The Dream of the Rood*, reveal a deeply religious mind, but scarcely deal so directly with Bible truths as to rank him with Caedmon in the direct line of those who have handed on the tradition of an English Bible. The same may be said of Bishop Ealdhelm, Abbot of Malmesbury, of whom we are told that, in his eagerness to win men to the truth, he used to stand like a gleeman on a bridge, and sing songs to the passers-by until he had gathered a crowd, when he would preach the Gospel to those whom he had thus taken with guile. Ealdhelm is said to have translated the Psalter; but of his translation, if it ever existed, no trace has survived.



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A PAGE OF THE LINDISFARNE GOSPELS

(St. John's Gospel, Chapter I. i.)

A fine example of the art and scholarship of Early English Christianity.

One thing is manifest in the presence of this brief recital of the work of these early attempts to bring the truths of the Bible home to the common people—namely that such activity implies a demand for what the poets were attempting to supply. The religious poems of Caedmon and his school did not come into existence without an audience which was prepared to listen to them, as is evidenced by the fact of their preservation. What becomes, then, of the specious theory that a translation of the Bible would have been fruitless, because there was not a public for it? The people who welcomed the rude paraphrases of the Caedmonian school would surely have been prepared ground for the matchless literature on which these were based, if it could have been given them in their own speech.

These poetical paraphrases, then, we may regard as the germs of the English Bible. "The kingdom of heaven," said Our Lord, "is like to a grain of mustard-seed, . . . which indeed is the least of all seeds; but when it is grown, it is the greatest of herbs." Closer approximations to the literal rendering of Bible truth were not unknown, and the beautiful story of the last days of Bede tells us how that great Christian and scholar was awake to the need of a vernacular Bible. With failing strength Bede had been labouring to complete his translation of St. John's Gospel into English, and when the morning of Ascension Day, A.D. 735, came, his scholars told him that there was still one chapter to do. "Take then your pen," he answered, "and write quickly." As the day wore on, it was plain that his time was growing short, and one after another of the brethren came into the cell to bid him farewell on his journey, and to beg his blessing. As the darkness began to fall, the boy who was acting as scribe bent over his master and whispered, "Master, even now there is one sentence more." "Write on fast," the dying man replied, and there was silence for a little, save for the sound of the pen as it travelled across the vellum, and the faltering words which it recorded. "See, dear master," the boy cried at last, "it is finished now." "Yes," answered

Bede, " you say well, it is finished now. Therefore take my head into your hands, and lay me down opposite my holy place, where it was my wont to pray." It was done as he bade, and, reciting the Gloria, the labourer went to the Master Whose words had been his last gift to the Saxon folk whom he loved.

Bede's translation is lost to us, and doubtless all the copies of it perished with so much more that was precious during those miserable years when the Danes harried Northumbria, as they harried the rest of England, with fire and sword, Fortunately, however, we are not left altogether without witness as to the work that was being done, albeit in a very limited and tentative manner, to make it possible, if not to give the Scripture directly to the people in English, at least to put an English version into the hands of their religious teachers. This work took the form of interlining some of the manuscripts of the Gospels with word for word translations of the Latin script, so that the monk who used the manuscript might learn the English meaning of the Latin words with which he was familiar.

The time before the coming of the Danes was for Northumbria, and, though to a lesser extent, also for other parts of England, one of great literary and artistic activity. The decision of the Synod of Whitby was followed up by the remarkable organising work of the great Archbishop, Theodore of Tarsus, " perhaps the greatest prince of the Church in all English history," to whom the English Church owes its organised episcopate. Theodore was much more than a great prince of the Church, he was also a great scholar and a great saint, who sincerely desired the highest good of the barbarous land to which he had so strangely been summoned from his own cultured East. It was a curious experiment to put a Greek from Paul's old city in charge of the semi-barbarism of Saxon England; but the choice of Theodore was amply justified by the results of his twenty-two years of toil. With the help of his two able lieutenants, Hadrian the African, and Benedict Biscop, the Englishman,

learning and art and music were everywhere encouraged, books were imported in large numbers, and schools of Latin and Greek were established. Together with the school of Canterbury, that of Bede at Jarrow kept alive the lamp of culture in the island, when it was burning low on the Continent, and in the end of the seventh and the beginning of the eighth century Northumbria was the centre of European scholarship, and Bede was the greatest scholar of the age—"an author," says Oman, "of a degree of merit to which no other historian of the Dark Ages attained. Procopius, writing in Constantinople—the centre of all learning—is the only wielder of the pen who can be compared to him in the space of five centuries."

Under such conditions, manuscripts of the Holy Scriptures did not fail to be multiplied in the monasteries, and were often executed with great splendour. We read that when Wilfred, the diligent and quarrelsome bishop of York, Ripon, and Hexham, dedicated his great church at Ripon, he laid upon the altar a cross of gold, and a magnificent Evangeliarium, covered with plates of gold and precious stones, and written in letters of gold upon purple parchment; and an Old English author has described the making of a book from its start, with the skin, to its gorgeous conclusion, in words which show the loving care that was exercised over such manuscripts. The skin is first of all "dipped in water, set in the sun, stripped of its hairs, cut with a knife, ground down with cinders, folded with fingers. Then the delight of the bird (the feather which makes the pen) wandered over my dusky surface when it had sprinkled me with healing water (illumination). Then the wing swallowed the dye of a tree mixed with water (ink) and stepped over me, leaving black marks behind. Afterwards men covered me with protecting boards, drew a skin around me, decked me with gold, adorned me with the fair work of smiths, encased me with gold and silver wire; and my ornaments and my red purple, and the glorious possessions in me are famous far and wide. Shield I am to nations, if the children of men

will use me. I helpful to men; great is my name; healing to heroes, and myself holy!"

One may feel that if some of this extraordinary enthusiasm for the mere craft of beautiful book-making had been turned in the direction of making the truths of the book more accessible to the common folk, it might have been better for England; but at least this is to be said, that these astonishingly beautiful manuscripts did become, in due time, the media of the transmission of an Anglo-Saxon Gospel to the Anglo-Saxon people. Perhaps the most notable example of this use, for which the gorgeous parchments were never intended originally, is that most magnificent manuscript known as *The Lindisfarne Gospels*, now in the British Museum. This is a book written on two hundred and fifty-eight leaves of fine vellum, each leaf measuring thirteen and a half by nine and three-quarter inches. Two hundred and fifty years after the original writing of the manuscript, a note was added by the monk Aldred, with whose work we have more to do than with the original writing.

Aldred's note runs as follows: "Eadfrith, Bishop of Lindisfarne, wrote this book, at the first, in honour of God and St. Cuthbert and all the saints in common who are on the island. And Aethelwald, Bishop of Lindisfarne, bound it on the outside and covered (?) it, as he was well able to do. And Billfrith, the anchorite, wrought the ornaments upon the outside and adorned it, this unalloyed metal gilded over, with gold and gems, and also with silver (?) And Aldred, an unworthy and most miserable priest, with the help of God and St. Cuthbert, wrote an English gloss above, and obtained for himself a home (?) with the three parts; (he glossed) Matthew's part for God and St. Cuthbert, Mark's part for the bishop, and Luke's for the community, paying, in addition, eight 'ores' of silver for his admission (?) And St. John's part (he glossed) for himself, namely for the good of his soul, and has offered to God and St. Cuthbert four 'ores' of silver likewise; that he may receive admission in

Heaven through God's mercy, and have happiness and peace upon earth, promotion and honour, wisdom and prudence, through the merits of St. Cuthbert. Eadfrith, Aethelwald, Billfrith, Aldred, made or adorned this Gospel Book for God and St. Cuthbert." On another page occurs a simple prayer of Aldred which has its own interest and pathos. " Thou Living God, be thou mindful of Eadfrith, Aethelwald, Billfrith, and Aldred a sinner; these four have, with God's help, been engaged upon this book."

Aldred's colophon has been questioned, as was to be expected, by those who believe that nothing good, artistic or otherwise, was ever done in these islands save by Celtic hands; but, though he wrote two hundred and fifty years after the original writing of the book, there can be little doubt that the history of so famous a book was likely to be far better known to him than to any of those who question his statement, and there seems to be no real reason, save prejudice, for refusing to accept his account. The precious book remained at Lindisfarne, according to tradition, until A.D. 875, when Bishop Eardulf, acting upon St. Cuthbert's last instructions, decided to take the bones of the saint, and other treasures, to the mainland, to escape from the Danes. Later, the bishop and his companions attempted to cross with their treasures to Ireland, but were driven back by a violent storm in the Solway Firth.

" In this storm," says the chronicler, " while the ship was lying over on her side, a copy of the Gospels, adorned with gold and precious stones, fell overboard and sank into the depths of the sea. Accordingly after a little while, when they had in some degree recovered their senses and reflected who and where they were, they bend their knees and prostrate themselves at full length before the feet of the sacred body, asking pardon for their foolish venture. Then they seize the helm and turn the ship back to the shore and to their fellows, and immediately they arrive there without any difficulty, the wind being astern. . . . Amidst their lamentations in this distress, at length the accustomed help of their

pious patron came to their aid, whereby their minds were relieved from grief and their bodies from labour, seeing that the Lord is a refuge of the poor, a helper in times of trouble. For appearing to one of them, Hundred by name, in a vision, he bade them seek, when the tide was low, for the manuscript which, as above related, had fallen from the ship into the midst of the waves. . . . Accordingly they go to the sea and find that it had retired much further than it was accustomed; and after walking three miles or more they find the sacred manuscript of the Gospels itself, exhibiting all its outer splendour of gold and jewels and all the beauty of its pages and writing within, as though it had never been touched by water." It will occur, no doubt, to the reader, that something less than a vision of St. Cuthbert might have suggested to men of common sense the possibility of their precious book being left by the receding spring tide on the sands of an estuary so pronouncedly tidal as the Solway Firth; but that is a minor detail of an interesting passage in the history of a famous copy of the Gospels.

It was long after this adventure of the Lindisfarne Gospels that Aldred was allowed to work his will upon them. Dr. R. A. S. Macalister unkindly describes what he did as "scribbling in it;" but this is an extreme instance of Celtic prejudice, and indeed, Aldred's interlineations add far more to the interest of the old manuscript than they can possibly take away from it by any interference which they make with the beauty of the original writing. What the "unworthy and most miserable priest" did was to write in a small and comparatively unobtrusive hand an interlinear word-for-word translation of the Latin original, a piece of work for which he surely deserves to be blessed rather than cursed. His translation cannot be regarded as an attempt to give the Gospels to the commonalty, save indirectly, for a manuscript so precious would never be allowed out of monastic keeping or priestly hands; but at least it would enable his brethren in the priesthood to give their people in their own tongue the sense of what they read in the learned tongue.

Here, then, is a verse or two of the beginning of the fourth chapter of St. Mark's Gospel, with the Latin version copied line for line, and Aldred's translation given word for word beneath, that we may realise something of how the familiar passage sounded to those who heard it for the first time read to them in English about A.D. 950.

Et iterum coepit docere ad mare, et congregata est ad
7 eftersona ongann laera to sae 7 gesomnad waes to
eum turba multa, ita ut in naven ascendens sederet in
him ðreat menigo sua thte in scipp astagg gesaett on
mari, et omnis turba circa mare super terram erat.
sae 7 alle ðreat ymb sae ofer eortho waes.
Et docebat illos in parabolis multa et dicebat illis
7 laerde hia in bispellum menigo 7 cuoeth to him
in doctrina sua. Audite; Ecce, exiit seminans ad
on lar his. Herath; Heono, eode the sawende to
seminandum; et dum seminat aliud cecidit circa
sawene; 7 mithy geseaw othersum feoll ymb
viam, et venerunt volucres et comederunt illud.
tha strete 7 cwomon flegendo 7 fretton eton thaet.

The Latin version from which Aldred made his literal translation, if it can be called a translation, was not that of the Vulgate, but the far older version known as the Old Latin. It therefore carries us back much beyond the time of Jerome, and represented a text earlier than any of our oldest surviving manuscripts of the New Testament. A generation or so later, comes another gloss which is known as the Rushworth Gospels, and is now in the Bodleian. The Latin of this manuscript was written by an Irish scribe, MacRegol, and the gloss was made by, or rather for, Farmen, priest of Harawuda (Harewood). "Farmen the Presbyter," runs the note, "this book thus glossed;" and a prayer is added which tells us the name of the actual scribe of the translation—"Let him that makes use of me pray for Owun who glossed this for Farmen priest at Harewood." The Rushworth

Gospels follow the Lindisfarne so closely, allowing for dialectical variations, as to suggest that the scribe had a copy of the Lindisfarne book before him.

A little later still, in the tenth and early eleventh centuries, come several similar versions of the Gospels, made for West Saxon use; while at the close of the tenth century, Abbot Aelfric made an Anglo-Saxon version of the Pentateuch, with Joshua, Judges, Esther, Job, part of the Books of Kings, and Judith and Maccabees. His reason in using for the purpose of his work so much of the warlike history of the Hebrews is probably unique in the history of translations of the Bible, for he tells us that he was impelled by the hope of kindling a patriotic spirit among his fellow-countrymen which would rouse them to resist the marauding Danes. It is curious to remember that six hundred years earlier, Ulfilas, in making his translation of the Bible for his fierce Moeso-Gothic tribesmen, "prudently suppressed the four books of Kings, as they might tend to irritate the fierce spirit of the barbarians."

Such, then, are the scanty evidences which survive from the Middle Ages of any attempt to give to our Saxon forefathers the Bible in their own tongue. It should be remembered that the evidence is so scanty, partly because of that fiery tide of Danish invasion which swept our land, and destroyed so much that was precious and beautiful in the notable culture of the Saxon England of Theodore, Cuthbert and Bede; and that what the Dane failed to destroy largely perished during the lapse of centuries because of the scorn with which the Norman conquerors and their descendants regarded all things Saxon. Even allowing for all this, however, the fact remains that no really adequate attempt was made by the Church of the Saxon period to give the Word of God to the common people, and that the reasons offered in apology for this default are quite inadequate. We may close this sketch of the Bible in Saxon England with a version of the Lord's Prayer in the English of King Alfred's time, which may serve as a kind of measure of the

changes which have taken place in the language before we meet with the next attempt at a translation of the Scriptures.

" Uren Fader dhic art in heofnas,
Sic gehalged dhin noma,
To cymedh dhin ric,
Sic dhin uuilla sue is in heofnas and in eardho,
Uren hlaf ofer uuirthe sel us to daeg,
And forgef us scylda urna,
Sue uue forgefan sculdgun urum,
And no inleadh uridk in costnung,
Al gefrig urich from ifle."

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Bible and the Saxon Folk; after the Conquest

WE have seen in last chapter how slight and inadequate was the attempt on the part of the Church to supply the common folk of Saxon England with the Scriptures in their own tongue. Indeed, inadequate is hardly the word to apply to the effort; for so far as the Church as a Church was concerned, there was no effort at all, and such work as was done was the attempt of zealous individuals to help their brother priests to interpret to their flocks the parts of the Bible which would be most constantly in use in the services of the Church. Whatever hope of the creation of a Saxon Bible may have lain in such glosses as those of the Lindisfarne and the Rushworth Gospels (and it was slight enough) was at once extinguished after the Conquest by the dominance of the Normans and their imported tongue. The Saxon speech was despised as that of a conquered race of semi-barbarians, and the mere idea of going to the trouble of presenting the Word of God to the vulgar folk in the vulgar tongue would have seemed half-sacrilegious and half-ludicrous to a society of which the clergy spoke Latin and the gentry spoke Norman-French. The remarkable and quite unexpected results of this degradation of the language, which meant that it ceased to be written to even the limited extent of the days before the Conquest, we shall see directly.

Changes upon the personnel and administration of the Church were immediate and drastic. Even the qualified independence of the Saxon Church was done away with,

and the Roman supremacy was asserted more and more strongly by the foreign prelates who now occupied the English Sees which Theodore of Tarsus had indeed organised, but had staffed mainly with native bishops. Bishops and abbots, with the members of the Cathedral chapters, were now practically exclusively foreigners, Normans, Frenchmen, or Italians, and they brought with them "the doctrines and standards of the reforming party on the Continent in the age of Hildebrand;" which is to say, that along with a distinctly higher standard of efficiency, and greater splendour in all the material aspects of the work of the Church, they brought also a slavish obedience to the centralising spirit of Rome, which meant in the end the destruction of all individualism in religion, and the gradual withering of the spirituality of the Church.

The great Churchmen of the post-Conquest days were as little in touch with the great mass of the people over whose spiritual welfare they were supposed to watch as a great Roman official of the early Empire was with the barbarous tribes over whom he ruled, and whom he utterly despised. The only Churchman through whom the Church came into touch with the people for whom, in theory, it existed, was the poor Saxon priest, who, like the flock whom he tended, (and the Master whom he served), was "despised and rejected," ranking, indeed, on no higher level in the manor than the villein. The home where he had lived in happy usefulness with his wife and children was rudely broken up by the enforcement of compulsory celibacy on all the clergy by the command of the Pope, and whatever slight access he may have had to sources of culture was now denied him by the fact that all the avenues to learning were now in the hands of those to whom he and his race were beneath contempt.

So far as language goes, therefore, the organised Church of the Norman period and the age immediately following it was divided from the minds of the common people by a great gulf, which it made not the slightest attempt to bridge.

The Word of God was veiled from all but the learned by the fact that it was nowhere extant save in a dead language, and the triumph of the Vulgate meant the disappearance of even the poor substitutes for a vernacular Bible which had been more or less in use. In later days it was the stock argument of the Romish Church against the translation of the Bible into English, that to offer it to the common folk in their own speech was to fly in the face of Christ's command, and to cast pearls before swine ; it was in this age that the spirit which was capable of such a blasphemy of Christ and His own body in the Church began to grow up.

Even the essentially aristocratic Church of the Feudal Age, however, could not afford to leave its mass of ignorant and despised folk entirely without some measure of instruction in religious truth ; and a way of teaching was found which conveniently combined the instruction of the multitude with the gratification of that passion for the pride of life, and its service by means of noble architecture, gorgeous colour, and magnificent ceremony which was characteristic of the time. The four centuries which followed the Conquest witness the full splendour of religious architecture, first in the Norman, then in the various developments of the Gothic form, together with the growth and flowering of the wonderful schools of French Gothic and English Gothic sculpture, and the great work of the Church's artists in stained glass. Magnificently as the great cathedrals, the abbey churches, and the greater parish churches, with their multitudes of noble statues, and their glowing storied windows, must have ministered to the pride of the great prelates and abbots who reared them, we must not forget that they were designed to do more than that.

From the time of the Conquest to the time of the Reformation, the great church of the bishopric, the abbey, or the parish, was the real "Bible of the Poor Folk," the only Bible of which they had any real knowledge, where in the carven stone of the great portals they could read in a speech which needed no interpreter the story of Creation, the Fall,

Redemption, the growth of the Church, and the final Judgment, and where within the sacred walls the light of the same divine message was cast across nave and transepts and choir in crimson, purple, and blue from the vast windows, with their delicate tracery. It was very wonderful and very beautiful, and we need not grudge to mix with our admiration for the artistic skill and the constructive daring which have left us such splendid relics of their time of triumph the acknowledgment that they were inspired, not altogether by mere joy in the exhibition of skill and wealth, but also by a sincere desire for the glory of God, and, though perhaps in a secondary degree, for the instruction and salvation of human souls. Yet, after all, and at the very best, such things were a poor apology for the actual truth which was so needlessly withheld, and their very success, such as it was, as the medium of teaching, meant inevitably the prolongation of the condition of an uneducated laity.

Meanwhile the Old English speech, utterly neglected and despised by the governing class, was gradually undergoing a metamorphosis which was the last thing that was contemplated by those who despised it, and which was destined to make it at last into the English language that we know. A language which, like English in the days after the Conquest, has almost (not altogether) ceased to be written, is apt to undergo changes which may in the end result in its becoming a far more flexible medium of thought, though they may also result, under less favourable auspices, in its degradation to a mere barbaric *patois*. No longer the subject of scholarly study, and therefore no longer subjected to the swaddling clothes of grammatical rules of inflection and gender, it becomes more fluid, and is able to adapt itself to changing times and conditions, and to absorb new terms.

It was this happier destiny which awaited the English tongue. Gradually dropping its clumsy and complicated grammatical integument, it became supple and graceful; adopting from the foreign speech which flourished alongside it whatever terms it needed for expression of ideas, it grew

steadily richer: until at last, when it emerged from its Babylonish Captivity and became once more the recognised speech of the whole nation, it was already well on the way to become the rich and flexible medium for the expression of ideas of every sort with which we are familiar, and in which we glory. It may be truly said that, had it not been for the time of contempt, during which the English language was, so to speak, lying fallow, we might never have had the extraordinary richness of a harvest of literature which has known only one parallel in the history of the world—that of the speech of ancient Greece.

For the present, however, there was little sign of such a development. The English language, indeed, did not absolutely cease to be written, and there were even some isolated efforts to give the folk of Saxon speech some greater benefit of the services of the Church through the medium of versions of portions of Scripture in their own tongue. Of these the chief was the vast metrical version of the Gospels and the Acts written by an Augustinian monk, Ormin or Orm, and known as the Ormulum. The huge manuscript, containing something like twenty thousand lines, now lying in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, proceeds on the plan of paraphrasing the Gospel for the day, and adding a short allegorical exposition. Orm gives us a good reason for his work—"If any one wishes to know why I have done this deed, I have done it so that all young Christian folk may depend upon the Gospel only, and may follow with all their might its holy teaching, in thought, and word, and deed." It would be difficult to find a better reason for the diffusion of a knowledge of Holy Writ, or a more effective condemnation of the withholding of it.

Orm's work had few imitators, and down to the middle of the fourteenth century the only other noteworthy attempts at rendering the Holy Scriptures into English were the prose translations of the Psalter by William of Shoreham, and Richard Rolle of Hampole, both of whom, as was natural, use the Vulgate as their original. The date of the translation

of William of Shoreham is roughly 1320, and that of Rolle, 1340. Wycliffe was born about 1324: so that these two translations are in effect the last signs of the work of the old era, before the dawning of the new.

Indeed the mention of such work, and the fact that there is so little of it to mention, sufficiently declare the attitude of the Church of this period towards the question of giving an English Bible to the English nation. It has been said of France at the time of the Reformation, that she rejected the light, to have it come back upon her at the Revolution in the form of lightning. Much the same thing might be said with regard to the attitude of the Church in England towards the Word of God. During the earlier part of the period between the Conquest and the rise of Wycliffism, the Church was at least strenuous and earnest in the work of God as she understood it, though we may think that without a vernacular Bible she was toiling with one hand tied behind her back. She did her best to feed the hungry, to impose peace upon her quarrelsome children, to encourage learning in her own way, and to preserve what had been learnt from the destroying energies of an age of strife. As we have seen, the very splendours of her magnificent cathedrals were more than mere gratifications of mundane pride, and were meant to teach, by their appeal to the senses, the truths of the Gospel. Yet these things were not by themselves sufficient, in default of the constant witness of the Word of God—not even in the days when the Church was doing her best to be true to the spirit of her Master. And when (largely because of the lack of the direct influence of the Word upon Churchmen who had become the mere slaves of a dead ritual, instead of the apostles of a living Gospel), the Church fell, with steadily increasing rapidity, below even the imperfect standard of the early days, when the monasteries were no longer either holy or learned, when the great princes of the Church were become mere proud secular barons, surely the strangest of followers of the Carpenter of Nazareth, and the lesser officials of the Church were such as Chaucer has

pictured for us ; then the Word, which, accepted and diffused in time, might have created in all ranks a spirit to which such corruptions would have been impossible, came back to the Church in England as a message of revolt and " a trumpet of sedition."

BOOK THREE

THE BIBLE IN ENGLAND—THE BREAK-DOWN OF MEDIÆVALISM

CHAPTER EIGHT

England in the Fourteenth Century (The England of Chaucer and Wycliffe)

TO most of us, I fancy, England of the fourteenth century means the England of Edward III, and the mention of Edward III suggests to minds familiar with our literature, and especially with the romances of chivalry, a period which seems on the surface the most glorious of our older history. It is the age when we imagine Chivalry at its height, with Edward himself, the Black Prince, Chandos, Audley, and a score of others as its English types, while France offers us Bertrand du Guesclin, De Chargny, Eustace de Ribeaumont and their gallant companions, as worthy rivals to the fame of the Englishmen. It is the age when, for a brief space, the glory of English arms, both by sea and by land, was the portent of the times, and was borne by the breath of fame from end to end of Europe. At Sluys, in 1340, the French fleet was destroyed in one of the bloodiest of sea-fights; six years later came Crécy to teach an astonished Europe the power of the English long-bow—a lesson which Poitiers underlined ten years later; while between the two great land battles came the brilliant sea-fight of "Les Espagnols sur Mer," as if to show that England could overmatch any adversary on either element.

Froissart's glittering picture draws every eye, and we scarcely realise for the moment that this brilliant world that he presents, which seems so desirable, is so only for the high-born, the wealthy, or the powerful, and that its foundations are laid in blood and mire, where the people toil and die that the gallant puppet-show overhead may go on uninterrupted. Modern *White Companies*, *Sir Nigels* and the like carry on the illusion; while when we turn to our own great representative poet of the time, there breathes from the magical pages of Chaucer such an air of health and superb vitality, freshness and joyfulness, as to make us feel that England in his time must surely have deserved, if ever it did, the epithet of "Merrie England," and that to go on pilgrimage with his jolly company through the April meadows of Kent must have been one of the purest joys on earth.

In all this, of course, there was a certain amount of truth; but the brilliance was evanescent and theatrical, the appearance of well-being was only an appearance, and the glitter and happiness were based upon want and misery, just as in the castles of the time feasting and dancing went on in the hall above over the heads of the prisoners who starved and rotted in the dungeons below. To understand the movements of the time, which had their own influence on those developments of the English Bible which we are trying to trace, we must try to see the period in a truer perspective than we can get from the work of Froissart and his copyists, priceless though the narrative of the chivalrous Frenchman may be. Even from the great war in France, which is so often all we care to read about in the period, the brilliance of the early days soon faded. What it meant at its proudest to the common folk of the land where the strife was waged, we may learn from that ghastly outbreak of maddened human nature, the Jacquerie—a nightmare of horror, not to be surpassed in grisly terror even by the worst excesses of the Revolution. Poitiers, with its glories of the Black Prince's triumph, and its stately courtesy to the vanquished, meant to the miserable French nation those unspeakable

deeds of darkness and blood,—a mere shriek of despair from outraged humanity, tortured at last beyond endurance. But even for England the tinsel glories were soon tarnished. The brilliance of the early days of the war fades with the deadly sickness of the Black Prince. Thirteen years after Poitiers, the French were insulting our own coasts and burning Portsmouth, while three years later, in 1372, the Earl of Pembroke and his whole fleet were captured off Rochelle by the combined fleets of France and Spain. England had to learn, by humiliation after humiliation, that Providence, fortunately for the world, has set bounds to the successes of unjust ambition.

Meanwhile, at home things were no better, in some respects, though the people never touched the depths of misery which were sounded by their fellows in France. Two years after the triumph of Crécy there came into England an invader against whose deadly might the long bow was helpless; and the Black Death claimed, before it left our shores for a time, possibly a half, certainly more than a third of the population of the land. Thirteen years later, it reappeared, and seven years only elapsed between this second visitation and a third,—three visitations of the most deadly of plagues in twenty years. One curious and yet perfectly natural consequence of the tremendous mortality was the immediate creation of a very urgent condition of labour trouble. Labourers were so few, and the demand for them so great, that the lower classes of the country awoke, almost with a shock, to a new consciousness of their own value, and at once began to put in a claim for a larger share in the fruits of their labour. Parliament in vain tried to restrain this tendency by passing the Statute of Labourers, which fixed wages at the old level, but also—a fact frequently forgotten—standardised prices at the old level; the attempt was foredoomed to failure, for no statute could create labourers where they were not, nor provide the corn which should have been raised by the men who were in their graves.

This consciousness of their own importance and value

on the part of the common folk was immensely increased by the evidence afforded by the brilliant victories of the French War of the value of the peasant as a fighting man. The steel-clad knight, with his long lance and fluttering pennon, is the picturesque figure of the romance of the time; he, and his overlord the great baron, bore away the glory and the main part of the profit; but the whole world knew that Créçy and Poitiers were not won by the knights and men-at-arms, but by the archers of England, with their longbows and deadly arrows. The armoured horseman, though he would survive for many a day to come, was only a survival —a hopeless anachronism—and he knew in his heart of hearts that his day was done. What is more, the common men who piled the ranks of the glittering French chivalry in ghastly, bloody heaps beneath the pitiless hail of shafts knew it also. The Black Death taught the common people of England their value; Créçy and Poitiers taught them their power.

Two other factors, apart from the religious question, which must be dealt with by itself, went to make this a time of upheaval and of the shifting of old landmarks. The underworld in England had learned that the ruling classes were not their masters on the field of battle; but if the great folk of the land could still have shown by their wisdom, virtue, patriotism, and self-denial that they were the fittest to lead and to rule, the commons of England would have followed them readily enough and with a fidelity far more firmly based than that of the old days when it was conditioned solely by fear. Unfortunately for themselves and their land, the upper classes knew not the day of their visitation. If the French War abroad was mismanaged, the country at home was misgoverned; and the weight of taxation was increased and embittered by the knowledge that only a fraction of what was wrung from the people ever reached the objects in whose interest it was professedly exacted, while the bulk of it went into the gaping pockets of a set of shameless extortioners, to be spent on their own pleasures or their

aggrandisement. The typical specimen of the governing class which the nobility of England offered at this crisis of its destiny was John of Gaunt—an utterly false and selfish scoundrel, whose temporary support of John Wycliffe, purely a cloak for his own unworthy designs, was one of the misfortunes of the earliest Protestantism of our country.

The second factor of the upheaval was this—that the nation was gradually learning its unity, and coming to understand and to be proud of the fact that it was the English Nation. The French War might have taught the commons the comparative helplessness of the armoured knight who had been the pillar of the dominant classes; but it had also united both classes in the pursuit of one aim, and in the pride of their national courage and strength. It was no longer a question of gentles who were Norman-French and commons who were English; gentles and commons together realised that they were all English, and proud of it. Perhaps the most significant indication of this new-born pride in the unity of the race is the coming into its own heritage of the English speech.

Up till the beginning of the Hundred Years' War, and even a little later, the hall-mark of gentility was that the aspirant should speak in a bastard dialect called Norman-French, which nine-tenths of his own countrymen did not understand, and at which a Frenchman laughed, with good reason. It is no mere coincidence that "six years after Poitiers a statute was passed through Parliament declaring that, since the French tongue was 'much unknown in this Realm,' all pleading and judgments in the law courts should be spoken in the English tongue and enrolled in Latin. 'Men of lawe fro that tyme shold plede in her moder tunge,' it was said." Twenty-three years later, in 1385, a year after Wycliffe's death, John of Trevisa writes of the usage in the schools of England—"So that now, the yere of oure Lorde, a thowsand thre hundred and foure score and fyve, and of the secound Kyng Richard, after the conquest nyne, in alle the gramere scoles of Engelond, children leveth Frensche and construeth

and lerneth in Englische. . . . Also gentil men haveth moche now i-left for to teche ther children Frensche."

Thus the whole sum of the tendencies of the time was working in the one direction. The dreadful mortality of the Black Death, and the colossal blunder of the Hundred Years' War had this in common, that they both wrote deep upon the consciousness of the Commons of England the sense of their own power and importance in the body politic; and thus they were growing ripe not only for the claiming of those temporal rights to which they asserted their claim with such terrible emphasis in 1381, by the Peasants' Rising, but also for the assertion of their claim to a share in all the blessings of the life spiritual. Behind these more manifest tendencies, there was working silently and unseen the sense of national unity, and the gradually increasing consciousness of the advantages of a single national speech as the sign and instrument of that unity. It was now, for the first time, possible to give to all the people of England an English Bible—a book which would appeal not simply to the users of one of the various regional dialects into which Old English was divided—Northumbrian, East or West Midland, or West Saxon—but would have a message and would find a welcome in every region and among every class of the new English nation. It remains, before we come to the actual effort which was made at this point to supply the nation with such a Bible, to consider what was the contribution of the English Church to the situation which I have been trying to describe, and what was that state of the Church which made it inevitable that its contribution should be such as I shall have to describe.

CHAPTER NINE

The State of the Church in England

THE other factor which made the Age of Wycliffe an age of upheaval and of the removal of the ancient boundaries was the effect produced upon men's minds by the state of the Church. In its citadel, the Papacy seemed for one moment to have touched the stars, with the claim of Boniface VIII to supreme sovereignty, both spiritual and temporal. In the Great Jubilee year of 1300, the number of pilgrims to Rome passes belief. Throughout the year, it was never less than two hundred thousand, repeatedly it was computed to exceed two millions, though such vast estimates must be received with caution. On the first day of the Jubilee, the Pope appeared as the spiritual Father of the Christian world. The following day, he wore the crown and crimson robe of the Cæsars, while the sword, sceptre, and orb were carried before him. His heralds challenged universal dominion for him—"Here are two swords. Now, Peter, dost thou see thy successor; behold, O Christ, thy vicegerent!" Two years later, Boniface left no doubt as to his claims by the publication of the Bull *Unam Sanctam*—"There are two swords, the spiritual and the temporal. Our Lord did not say of these two swords 'It is too much,' but 'It is enough.' Both are in the power of the Church . . . the former that of the priest, the latter that of kings and soldiers *to be wielded at the command and by the sufferance of the priest. . . . Therefore we assert, define, and pronounce that it is necessary to salvation to believe that every human being is subject to the Pontiff*

of Rome." Human pride could scarcely imagine anything more imposing than such a claim.

Actually when the claim was made, Boniface, and the Church which he represented, stood on the very edge of the abyss into which they were shortly to be plunged. A year after the publication of his insolent and blasphemous bull, the Pope was a prisoner in the hands of his enemies, and the French king's advocate Nogaret, interposing to save his life, did it with a jibe—" See, thou sorry Pope, how thou art protected, even so far from France, by the goodness of my lord the king." Rescued from his captivity at Anagni, the miserable Boniface dies thirty-three days after, broken-hearted and overwhelmed. In two years more, his successor, Clement V, removed the Papal Court to Avignon, where it remained in what came to be known as " the Babylonish Captivity " for seventy-two years, the more or less servile slave of the French kings. The reputation of the Papacy during those seventy-two years would be incredible, were it not that the evidence is absolutely unimpeachable. " At their iniquitous court," says Trevelyan, " benefices in every country of Catholic Europe were put up for sale, and the income spent in licentious splendour. In the year in which Clement the Sixth ascended the throne it was said that a hundred thousand clergy came to Avignon to traffic in simony. . . . The Commons of the Good Parliament, in language which seems more suited to their successors in the days of the Gunpowder Plot than to pious Catholics, spoke in their petitions of ' the sinful city of Avenon.'." What the greatest mind of the time thought of the state of the Church in his day may be seen in Dante's *Purgatory*, Canto XXXII, 146 *sq.*, where he pictures the Church as a shameless harlot, and the French king as her giant bully.

In 1377 came the return of the Papal court to Rome, which might have been expected to lead to better things; but such an expectation was bitterly disappointed. Two years later came the Great Schism, and Europe was edified by the sight of two rival " Vicars of Christ," hurling anathemas

CAXTON SHOWING PROOFS TO KING EDWARD IV (1477)

From a painting by Maclise.

It was the Printing Press which first made the Bible the treasure of the common folk.

at one another, and waging war upon one another in the name of Jesus. Support was divided between the rival Popes not according to any judgment on the merits of the case, but according to national interests and ambitions. England, and the powers which went with her, supported Urban, while Clement was the tame Pope of France and the powers which followed the French interest. Under such conditions it was not likely that respect for the Church was likely to grow among a laity which had rapidly been increasing in knowledge of many things, and not least of its own power. The assertion of temporal supremacy had been shown to be a manifest figment; it remained to be seen whether the spiritual supremacy rested on any sounder basis. There was one condition, indeed, on which the Romish Church might safely have rested her dominion over the hearts and lives of men, on which in fact that dominion might have been more firmly established than ever. Had those at the head of her councils had the wisdom to see that the true strength of the Church must lie in her response to the spiritual needs of Christendom, that her power must lie, not in empty claims to temporal dominion, at which all better-instructed men were beginning to mock, but in the fact that she taught and lived up to a higher standard than that of the world, that her ordained servants were better, wiser, more learned, and more pure, less selfish and self-seeking, more devoted to teaching and applying the example of their Master, then the Church would have re-asserted her dominion in a form unshakeable. She need never have lost that dominion, of course, had she been wise after this fashion at other stages of her history; but even now, though the sands were running low in the glass, it was not too late for her to regain what she had already lost, and what she was steadily losing. There was no perverse and impious resolve in men's hearts not to respect the Church; all that they asked, as a condition of a respect which they would gladly have given her, was that she should make herself respectable. But that was what she obstinately refused to do; and the result was the revolt of the free nations against

a dominion which they would have gladly continued to endure had it justified itself by any spiritual superiority.

Papal authority in temporal things had been shaken to the foundations by the events of the fourteenth century. Men were no longer disposed to accept Rome's dictation in matters of the State; they now began to ask why they should accept it in matters of religion, unless the Church could show some justification for her claim to be supreme here, as she had conspicuously failed to show it in the other sphere. It was the critical moment for the Church, and she failed entirely to justify her claim to rule the hearts and consciences of men. With the wider aspect of the question we are not concerned, but simply with the Church in England, and her answer to the question which Englishmen began to put as to her right to rule them. Virtually no answer was forthcoming; the things manifest were that the central power in Rome meant to continue using England simply as its own tool and milch-cow, and that the local authority saw no reason for doing anything to improve itself and the standard of its relations with the people.

There is no need to insist upon the prevalence of corruption, in the more restricted sense of the word, within the Church. Such corruption there was, often to a scandalous extent. Chaucer's pictures of the ecclesiastics of his time are by no means overloaded with dark tints, for the great poet paints for us an England a good deal brighter than it appeared to many other competent observers; but, even on Chaucer's showing, the English Church of the fourteenth century was in dire need of mending. Nothing more damning has ever been alleged by its opponents against the Roman Church in England than that which is revealed, absolutely beyond question, by the attitude of the people in general to an institution, which, as we are told, was the greatest of benefactors to the laity, and which, if such a claim were justified, should have been beloved. The record of what happened at St. Albans in 1381 shows conclusively that, far from being loved, some of the great monastic

institutions had succeeded in earning the bitterest hatred from those who lived beneath their shadow; and the horrible and indecent glee with which the monkish chronicler of the Abbey records the base and treacherous cruelty with which that hatred was avenged when authority had recovered from its cowardly impotence is the evidence which none can impeach that the monks of St. Albans, at least, richly deserved the hatred which they had earned. "The monks of St. Albans, judged out of their own mouth, knew nothing of Christian love, or even of common humanity, towards their neighbours."

Apart from such matters, however, the head and front of the Church's failure to justify itself in England lay not so much in this, that the Church had fallen into corruption, as that the standard of the laity, in knowledge, and in conduct, had risen, and was rising, and that the Church's standard was not rising along with it, or in advance of it, as it should. On the mere question of knowledge alone, the evidence as to the state of ignorance prevalent among the English clergy of the fourteenth century would be incredible, were it not vouched for unimpeachably, and by no single authority, but by many. There were, no doubt, shining exceptions to the rule, and diligent students who rose above the appalling level of ignorance and illiteracy which characterised those who should have been the instructors of the people; but they were exceptions, and the average level was appalling.

At the beginning of the thirteenth century, Giraldus Cambrensis tells us of two abbots whose Latin was so shaky that when they were asked to translate simple passages one rendered "repente" (suddenly) by "he repented," and the other translated "aequum et salutare" (just and advantageous) by "to leap upon a horse." In justice to the Papacy it should be said that these learned abbots had been reported to the Pope for illiteracy; in justice also it should be recorded that he continued them in their abbacies after such notable proof of their learning! Of six abbots of the same century whose lists of their own private books have survived, only

one possessed a copy of the Vulgate; the other five had no copy of the book which was supposed to be the foundation of their faith, though their total libraries numbered forty-six books all told. There are in existence twenty-five catalogues of monastic libraries for the period 1077–1389. "Excluding Anglo-Saxon gospel books, a few of which were still preserved in the great abbeys (and which, of course, the monks of the post-Conquest period could not read) . . . there is not a single reference to the possession of an English Bible, prose psalter, gospel book, or any other biblical book." (M. Deanesly, *The Lollard Bible*.)

It is, of course, one of the main arguments against the translation of the Bible into the speech of the common people that this duty should be discharged, and was discharged by the parish priests, who were bound to give, and did give to their parishioners the meaning of the words of those passages of the Vulgate which were read, and who could exercise a wise selection in the truths which they communicated, on the stock principle, so honouring to Christ's flock, the laity, of not giving that which is holy unto dogs, or casting pearls before swine. How far such a theory of the efficiency of the parish priest of the Middle Ages will hold water is demonstrated by the summing up of the evidence by Miss Deanesly—"The evidence quoted is enough to shew that although the clergy were, in theory, expected to expound the scriptures to their parishioners, they must frequently have been unable to translate the Latin text themselves." Instances of the ludicrous blunders made by some of the parish priests in their efforts to explain to the people what they did not understand themselves are common enough; some of them would be laughable if they were not rather deplorable. "There is the case," says Giraldus Cambrensis, "of the priest who was preaching to the people a sermon about St. Barnabas, and he said among other things: 'He was a good man and a saint, but he used, however, to be a robber.' For his authority was that verse of the gospel, namely, 'Now Barabbas was a robber,' and he did not

distinguish properly between Barnabas and Barabbas." "Saint John who first brought the Latin language to England" is a new figure in the saintly Calendar. He was created by one of these learned priests who thus translated "Sanctus Johannes ante portam Latinam!" The work of such luminaries must have been edifying in the extreme to their fortunate parishioners. "If, therefore, the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness."

To the nobler minds among the heads of the English Church such ignorance seemed sufficiently deplorable; but their honourable efforts to remedy it met with no success, and only prove how widespread and how incorrigible was the evil. Robert Grosseteste, the famous Bishop of Lincoln (1235–1253), who was one of the most zealous in the attempt to secure greater efficiency among the clergy, has left on record the statement of what he considered the minimum equipment of a parish priest in respect of knowledge, and it is sufficiently modest,—ability to say the Ten Commandments and explain them to his people, together with the seven deadly sins; and to understand, "at least simply," the seven sacraments and the three creeds. They must further be able to teach the children the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Hail Mary. Even this scanty store of knowledge, however, was beyond many of his priests, and we find the good bishop complaining that—"To-day there are many pastors, bound to feed their hungry flock with the Word of God, who have no food to do it with: *for there are many who do not know how to explain to the people a single article of the faith or commandment of the decalogue.*"

So much for the standard of knowledge among the clergy of the middle of the thirteenth century. Half a century later, another notable bishop, Quivil of Exeter, issued a statement on the subject which shows how little progress had been made during these fifty years. Archdeacons, he says, are to enquire as to vicars, rectors, or priests who are "enormously illiterate," and to report them. The standard of "enormous

illiteracy" is interesting; it consisted of inability to say by heart "the ten commandments, the seven sins, the seven sacraments, and the creed;" and to secure that no priest should have any excuse for such abysmal ignorance as is contemplated, the worthy bishop issued a tract summarising these points, and ordered each priest in his diocese to possess himself of it under a penalty of a fine of one mark. Priests who had attained to such a height of knowledge as to be able to say the matters mentioned by heart were apparently to be left alone.

The whole evidence goes to show that translation or exposition of the Vulgate was not in the least regarded as one of the normal duties of the parish priest, and that even if it had been so regarded, there was a large section of the clergy who were quite incompetent to discharge it. It is quite apparent that the idea that it might be a good thing for the laity to become better acquainted with the Word of God, of which their teachers had, as we have just seen, so profound a knowledge, never entered the heads of the priesthood. Sermon-preaching became more popular during the latter part of the thirteenth century and the fourteenth; and in those days, as at present, there were purveyors of ready-made sermons and materials for sermons for the use of priests who were either too lazy or too ignorant to produce exhortations of their own. A number of these collections are still extant, and the study of them reveals the significant fact that while there are plenty of stories and sermons dealing with the virtues and sins of all classes of society, including the various orders of clergy, not a single story or argument can be found which advocates the practice of Bible-reading, either by clergy or laity. As in our own day, also, there existed manuals of the duties of a parish priest which were, no doubt, just as useful for any practical purpose as their modern successors. The favourites, apparently, were the *Oculus Sacerdotis* of William de Pagula, the *Pupilla Oculi* of John de Burgh (1380), the *Ars præedicandi* of Alain of Lille, and the *Speculum Ecclesiae* of Hugh of St. Cher. *Not one of*

these refers to any duty lying upon the priest to instruct his flock in the Word of God.

The evidence as to the state of the Church, therefore, apart from any question of what may specifically be called corruption, amounts to this—that in an age when the laity were beginning to become conscious of their own importance and power, and were no longer prepared to accept the mere word of a priest as to their duty, because they saw that in most cases the priest was neither a better nor a more learned man than themselves, the clergy were neither willing nor able to offer them the Word of God as their standard, instead of that of man, priestly or otherwise. The laity were craving for a certainty on matters of faith and conduct greater than they could derive from the dicta of Churchmen who were manifestly concerned merely with the maintenance at all hazards of their own privileges. Their craving was both natural and right, and if it had been reasonably and wisely met, the world might have been saved an infinity of strife and sorrow ; but the Church met it with a blank *non possumus*, which was sometimes perfectly honest, the outcome of that sheer ignorance among the priesthood which rendered it impossible for them to transmit a knowledge which they did not possess themselves, but was often, at least in the higher orders, the fruit of that pride of class and privilege which so continually expressed itself in the misapplication of the words of Christ—" Give not that which is holy unto dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine."

The plain facts were that the lower orders of clergy could not give the Bible to the common folk if they would, because they did not know it themselves, and that the higher orders would not give it if they could, because its exclusive possession was one of the key positions in which they entrenched themselves for the great conflict of privilege against the levelling tendencies of the time. No more fatal decision was ever come to by the Church than when it stubbornly refused the claim of the laity to possess the Word of God in a form in which all could read and understand it, instead of receiving

it in doles and driblets, according to what was supposed to be the knowledge, but was actually more often the ignorance of a parish priest.

This claim, as we have seen, was really inevitable, a natural outcome of the forces which were busily breaking down all the old boundaries of mediævalism, and creating the new world which was soon to be enlightened by the Renaissance. In due course, as always happens, the need produced the man.

CHAPTER TEN

John Wycliffe and the Lollards

THE man who came to the front during the latter part of the fourteenth century as the voice of the general dissatisfaction with the state of things alike in religious and civil matters, and who found a way to give an answer to the claim of the laity for a Bible in their own language, has never had the good (or ill) fortune to become a popular favourite or a romantic hero, as some others on both sides of the great religious controversy have done. His name, indeed, has become the battle-cry of a movement which, however ample may be its justification in the antics of those whom it has opposed, has been characterised by more zeal than discretion, and has done the great pioneer's memory more harm that good; but, apart from this somewhat unfortunate and unsatisfactory kind of popularity, he has maintained through the half-millennium which has elapsed since his death the same aloofness which seems to have characterised him during his life. Few men who have been involved as he was during a great part of their lives in strenuous, not to say furious, controversy have left such an impression of being in, but not of, the strife in which they were engaged, and of living an inner life which remained withdrawn, and cold to all the passions which were aroused by the changing fortunes of the battle. Luther, bitterly hated, was also devotedly loved, and remains one of the most human of men; John Knox, with all his grimness, could win men as well as constrain them; even Calvin gives evidence of being a man of like passions with ourselves,

behind all his almost inhuman austerity of thought and practice; but this Oxford don was typical of what has often been a mere pose and weakness in the product of Oxford, but in him was simple nature—the habit of appearing to sit apart, and of contributing to the thought and the strife of the time something which may, as a matter of fact, add fuel to the fire, but is delivered, all the same, with an air of somewhat weary judicial calm.

Wycliffe had much to say in his time which roused the most furious passions of hatred in his opponents; he said it with an incisiveness and absence of all fear which made every sentence like a barbed arrow; but he himself remained cold and unmoved throughout. One questions if even his most intimate supporters ever got very near to the inmost chamber where the soul of John Wycliffe sat, brooding over many things. There was a time in his career when the great scholar owed his protection from the attack of the angry Church to that unmitigated self-seeker and rascal, John of Gaunt, who thought to make him a tool in the assault which was to divert the wealth of the Church into the pockets of a few great lords like himself; but Wycliffe cared nothing for either John of Gaunt or his protection when they stood between him and the truth as he saw it, and when the prince, the most powerful man in England, came down specially to Oxford to persuade Wycliffe to keep silence on the question of Transubstantiation, he went back a baffled man, who had met something stronger than the greatest material power.

Such aloofness and austerity of devotion to sheer truth has its advantages; but it has also its dangers, and it absolutely disqualifies any controversialist from ever making the cause which he champions a popular one. This has been the fate of Wycliffe, and Wycliffism, or Lollardy, if one cares to use the nickname which (like Christian) was given in scorn, but has won its right to a place of honour. Religion in England owes to Wycliffe and the Lollards more than has ever been acknowledged. Indeed there can have been

few movements of consequences so important which have received such scant justice, not only from opponents, but even at the hands of those who should have known their debt to it. It has suited the opponents of the truths for which Wycliffe stood to represent Wycliffism as little more than a spiteful and ill-instructed rebellion against constituted and righteous authority, speedily quenched, and producing no lasting results. "Wycliffe," writes a clergyman of the Church of England, with a somewhat ludicrous air of pontifical authority, "held views which if carried into practice would have been totally subversive of morality and good order"—good order, in Mr. Dore's opinion, being apparently represented by the system which allowed a single fortunate ecclesiastic to hold half a dozen preferments without discharging the duties of any of them, and gave the Pope power to approve, as he did in 1360, of the appointment of a Bishop in England who was unable to read his letters, and morality being best served by the sale of indulgences, and the remission in consideration of cash payments of the penalties imposed by the clerical courts.

Wycliffe has been blamed for the Peasants' Rising of 1381, by men who seem incapable of understanding that, even if it were true, as it is not, that he had anything to do with that event, the Rising, with all its deplorable excesses, was a great landmark in the making of English freedom, and was itself infinitely more creditable than the base and treacherous methods by which it was put down. Orthodox opinion of him may be best expressed in the contemporary verdict from St. Albans—"The devil's instrument, Church's enemy, people's confusion, heretic's idol, hypocrite's mirror, schism's broacher, hatred's sower, lies' forger, flatteries' sink, who, stricken by the horrible judgment of God, breathed forth his soul to the dark mansions of the black devil." It would, no doubt, be less forcibly expressed to-day; but the net result would be much the same.

The actual facts, of course, are very different. Born about 1320 near Richmond, in Yorkshire, and coming of a good

Yorkshire stock, Wycliffe was educated at Oxford, then the second school of Europe, became possibly a Fellow of Merton, and was certainly by 1361 Master of Balliol, and the foremost scholar of the University. Early in his career, he became known for his keen and strenuous vindication of the position of the Scriptures as the supreme rule of human life and conduct—a point in which, as we have seen, he was quite exceptional in an age which still held the possession of even a competent knowledge of the Word of God to be quite unessential to a priest of God. Until he was fifty years of age, his reputation was purely an Oxford reputation, though his views on the need of Church reform on Scriptural lines were probably well enough known and regarded as sufficiently eccentric.

From the year 1366 onwards, he enters upon a sphere of activity, which though still concerned with ecclesiastical affairs, is so from the point of view of national politics. Here he is the defender of the English Parliament's decision to resist Pope Urban's claim to exercise temporal authority in England. In 1377 he was appointed by the Crown to act as one of the Royal commissioners at the Conference of Bruges, where the subject of the Pope's constant interference with clerical patronage in our country was dealt with. No settlement, of course, was reached, for however eager and honest the English Parliament might be for the abatement of this crying scandal, the other two parties to the case, the Pope and the King, were neither eager nor honest, but were quietly determined to maintain a system, which, however scandalous, suited them both. No doubt the knowledge which he gained at this conference of Rome and its ways had much to do with the subsequent attitude taken up by him. The immediate point to be noticed, however, is that at this stage of his career, Wycliffe appears, not only as the foremost scholar of his time in England, but as being regarded as the fittest man to represent the case of his country in a matter of great national importance.

Ere long he was to realise that it was a dangerous thing

for any man, even at the call of his country, to oppose one of the pet corruptions of Rome. Three years after the Bruges Conference occurred that extraordinary scene in St. Paul's where John of Gaunt and Earl Percy of Northumberland, a strangely assorted pair of bedfellows for a man whose life was so pure of any imputation of worldliness or worldly motives, protected him, with characteristic arrogance, it must be admitted, against the attack of Bishop Courtenay. The main reason for Courtenay's hostility was the fact that Wycliffe had dared to advocate what many men in England were coming to realise the absolute necessity of, in view of the incessant growth of ecclesiastical wealth and arrogance —the secularisation of Church property; and the Bishop, who had the courage of his conviction as certainly as Wycliffe, overrode, on this occasion, his milder ecclesiastical chief, the ill-fated Archbishop Sudbury, who would fain have let sleeping dogs lie. The attack on the reformer came to nothing on this occasion. Indeed one of the curious features of Wycliffe's life was that a man so furiously hated by the Church of Rome should have escaped all attacks upon him.

It may partly have been the determined hostility thus shown by Rome to any proposals for the abating of a state of affairs which was rapidly becoming a danger to the English State which led Wycliffe to stiffen in his attitude towards Papal claims to authority of any sort. More probably it was the outbreak of the Great Schism, which happened the next year, and gave the world the spectacle of the seamless robe of Christ being rent in twain by His chiefest representatives, and of two so-called Vicars of Christ hurling anathemas at one another in the much-abused name of their Master. From now, at all events, Wycliffe's opposition, not only to Roman practice, but to Roman doctrine, becomes much more pronounced, and while he establishes his order of itinerant preachers, to counter the work of the four orders of friars, he advances to his denial of the doctrine of Transubstantiation, and of the headship of the Pope. But by far the most important characteristic of this, the last stage of his career, is

that now he determined to strike a blow at the strongest citadel of Rome's supremacy in England—the ignorance of the actual truth of Scripture in which the people had been kept by the absence of a vernacular Bible, and the incapacity of the priesthood to make up for the lack by their own renderings of God's Word. In our next chapter we shall discuss the question of the Wycliffe Bible, and the relation to it of the man whose name it bears; in the meantime it must suffice to quote the verdict of Miss Deanesly in her judicial survey of the question—"The evidence that the fourteenth-century English Bible was really due to Wycliffe is cumulative." This does not mean, of course, that he actually translated the whole Bible, or even any large part of it, himself; but that the conception and instigation of the whole work was due to him—a position which has been bitterly attacked, but may now be regarded as finally established.

The one point on which the enemies of the great reformer were successful in their attack on him was the elimination of his influence and teaching from Oxford. Till within two years of his death, he continued to lecture at his old University, and the general body of the University and its authorities, apart from the four orders of friars whose hatred was implacable, was enthusiastically attached to him. The devotion of his University was, however, forcibly broken down by a combination of the friars with the royal authority, and Wycliffism was forcibly uprooted from Oxford, with the result that for a hundred years the record of the great University in respect of scholarship is practically blank. No more than this could be accomplished against the great heretic by his opponents, and Courtenay's second attack on him in 1382 proved as futile as the first, though Wycliffe fully expected that he would either be burnt or got out of the way by some other form of violent death. Finally, after temporarily recovering from a stroke of paralysis, he succumbed to a second stroke, which fell upon him during the celebration of Mass in his own church of Lutterworth. He died quietly on the last day of the year 1384. "Admirable,"

says Fuller, " that a hare so often hunted with so many packs of dogs should die at last quietly sitting in his form."

It has often been said of the religious movement which he initiated that it appealed only to the ignorant, and only to the ignorance and envy of the lower classes, while, moreover, it was speedily crushed down, and finally extinguished, leaving no lasting results. The statement that it was a movement only for the ignorant comes with distinct humour from the side which crushed Wycliffism out of Oxford by main force, and through an unholy alliance of the Friars, the Bishops, and the State, three parties which on every other question hated each other only less bitterly than they hated the man who sought to reform them all. Wycliffism, far from being the creed of the ignorant in its beginning, was the creed of the most enlightened section of the most enlightened University of the time, and its founder was not only the Master of one of Oxford's most famous Colleges, but was by far the most famous scholar of England in his day. For the opponents of Wycliffism to blame it in its later stages for lack of scholarship is much as if a murderer should blame his victim for showing a lack of vitality. It ought not to lie with the obscurantist to blame others for the obscurity which he has carefully created.

Neither is it in accordance with fact to say that Wycliffism, or Lollardy, was extinguished, and led to nothing. It was driven underground, certainly, by persecution, and wholesale burning ; but it survived, nevertheless, a secret but potent force in the spiritual life of England during the next century and a half ; and the comparatively easy victory of the cause of spiritual freedom in Reformation times was largely due to the preparation of the ground by Wycliffe and his school.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Wycliffe's Bible. Was it Really Wycliffe's?

IT has been denied, with various degrees of emphasis and various degrees of assurance, that such a book ever existed. Not only have we been told that Wycliffe never translated a single sentence of the version which goes by his name, but the matter has been pushed further, and Cardinal Gasquet has informed us that the "Bibles fair and old, written in English," which Sir Thomas More says that he himself had seen in laymen's hands, licensed by the bishop of the diocese, were actually authorised versions of orthodox Catholics, made before Wycliffe's time. Sir Thomas More has, indeed, made a most interesting contribution to the study of the history of the English Bible, far more interesting than he imagined; but quite apart from the question of whether he was right or wrong in his assertion about these orthodox translations which he maintains that he saw, it requires a good deal of assurance to quote his dialogue as a proof of the enlightened liberality with which the Roman Church was in the habit of dealing with the translation of Scripture.

First of all, it has to be remembered that More was writing in 1528, and that his opinion as to what the Church should consider lawful and advisable in the case of translations has no bearing whatsoever on the question of what the Church of a century and a quarter earlier practised in the matter. It has not even much of a bearing on the practice of the Church in his own time; for More was an unusually enlightened layman, far in advance of the average standard of lay opinion

WYCLIFFE SENDING FORTH HIS ITINERANT PREACHERS

These Evangelists of the 14th century gave the people a living Gospel in place of the old wives' fables of the friars.

on the subject, and still more in advance of clerical opinion. It is interesting, therefore, though the matter is strictly a digression, to see what was the degree of use of Scripture which the most enlightened layman in England was willing to concede to the orthodox laity (he conceded no liberty whatsoever to the unorthodox) in 1528, because from this it is possible to draw one's own conclusions as to the degree of liberty which was likely to be conceded in 1400, not by laymen, but by clerical judgment.

Here, then, is More's scheme for the circulation of an English Bible among the laity of Henry VIII's England, in his own words, from which the reader can judge as to the inherent probability of the existence of such previous translations as those to which he has referred, and the liberty which would be likely to be granted to the readers of them more then a century before by the bishops, always notoriously a century or so behind lay opinion at any time. "For it might be with dylygence well and truly translated by som good catholyke and well lerned man, or by dyuerse dyuydynge the laboure amonge theym, and after conferryng theyr seuerall partys together, eche with other. And after that myght the work be allowed and approued by the ordynaryes, and by theyre authorytees so put into prent, as all the copyes shold come hole into the bysshoppys hande. Whyche he maye after hys dyscrecyon and wysedome delyver to suche as he perceyueth honest, sad, and vertuous, with a good monicyon & fatherly counsayl to vse yt reuerently wyth humble hart and lowly mynd, rather sekying therin occasyon of deuocyon than of dyspycyon. And prouydyng as mych as may be that the boke be after the deceace of the partye brought agayn and reuerently restored vnto the ordynary. So that as nere as may be deuysed, no man haue yt but of the ordynaryes hande, and by hym thoughte and reputed for suche as shall be lykely to vse yt to goddys honour and meryte of his own soule. Among whome yf eny be proued after to haue abused yt, than the vse thereof to be forboden hym, eyther for euer, or tyll he be waxen wyser.

By our lady quod youre frende thys way myslyketh not me. But who sholde set the pryce of the boke?

Forsoothe quod I that reken I a thynge of lytell force. For neyther were yt a grete mater for any man in maner to geue a grote or twayne aboue the meane pryce for a boke of so great profyte, nor for the byshop to gyue them al fre, wherin he myght serue hys hole dyocyse wyth the cost of .x.li. I thynke or xx. markys. Whyche some I dare saye there is no bysshop but he wold be glad to bestowe about a thynge that myght do hys hole dyocyse so specyall a pleasure wyth suche a spyrytuall profyte."

Such was the extreme liberality of the most enlightened layman of England in 1528. The translation when printed was to be handed over *in toto* to the bishop, and by him doled out in single copies, preferably at his own expense, to selected laymen, who were expected to arrange for their executors to return the precious volume to the bishop after their death! Perhaps the best criticism on such a scheme is the gentle irony of Miss Deanesly, "In practice, this scheme could hardly have been democratic." The reader, however, can hardly fail to note, that under More's scheme the people who received copies of the Bible were precisely those who, on the Saviour's own principle, needed it least, and that it was absolutely withheld from those whose need, on the same principle, was the greatest. One wonders how Sir Thomas proposed to reconcile his essentially aristocratic plan with Christ's "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick; I came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

Further, the utter inadequacy of the scheme is manifest. The sum which More expects the bishop to disburse with gladness, would pay, says Mr. A. W. Pollard, for thirty folio Bibles, or fifty in quarto. Thirty Bibles, or fifty at the outside, for the diocese of London, or Lincoln, or Exeter! Sir Thomas in his time had a vein of gentle humour; but I question if it was ever exercised with more pungency than when he dared to say that there would be no bishop who would not

be glad to pay for Bibles to distribute to the godly (and well-to-do) folk in his diocese. Somehow one does not feel able to imagine wreathed smiles on the episcopal countenances when the bills came in. In fact the whole scheme, which More evidently considered liberal to a degree, is perhaps as good evidence as the most ardent Wycliffite could desire as to the probable state of episcopal opinion on the liberty of Scripture reading a century before. If this was the best that could be done in the green tree of 1528, and the full tide of Renaissance enthusiasm for learning, what was likely to be done in the dry tree of 1400, when Greek was next to unknown in England!

More's scheme, therefore, quite unconsciously bears witness against the likelihood of there ever having been in England such orthodox translations of Scripture, of Wycliffite or pre-Wycliffite date, as he confidently asserts to have existed to his own knowledge. The simple fact of the matter is that absolutely no evidence exists for such translations as Sir Thomas More believed himself to have seen, and as Cardinal Gasquet argues for in *The Old English Bible*. If such Bibles really existed, "authorised versions," the creation of Catholic translators, what has become of them all? Even of Wycliffe's Bible, to give it for the moment its popular name, there were known to Forshall and Madden, the editors of the standard edition of the book, no less than one hundred and seventy examples, and others have come to light since their day. This after all the efforts that were made to discover and destroy all copies, during the time when the Lollards were being persecuted. If nearly two hundred copies of a work produced under such unfavourable conditions still survive, after the lapse of five centuries, how many more copies of these authorised and protected translations ought to have survived? The episcopate was under no temptation to destroy them, but rather to protect them, since they were licensed by episcopal authority; it has never been the custom of Reformers, Lollards or Protestants, to burn God's Word; from an antiquarian point of view they would be of surpassing

interest and would be jealously preserved by any person of any knowledge who came across them; where, then, have they vanished to? For not one single copy of these orthodox versions has ever been produced in support of the claim made on their behalf.

The fact is that Sir Thomas More, without any desire to deceive, was himself deceived when he imagined the Bibles which he had seen in the houses of orthodox Catholics, under episcopal licence, to have been anything else than the very Wycliffite translation of which he had so poor an opinion. How much More actually knew about the translation which he condemned is seen by the words of his condemnation of it. "For ye shall understand," he says, "that the great arch heretic, Wycliffe, whereas the whole Bible was long before his days by virtuous and well learned men translated into the English tongue, and by good and godly people with devotion and soberness well and reverently read, took upon of a malicious purpose to translate it of new. In which translation he purposely corrupted the holy text, maliciously planting therein such words, as might in the readers' ears serve to the proof of such heresies as he went about to sow."

It is quite evident, from such a statement, that More knew nothing of the version which he was criticising. "His only authority for his statements about the Wycliffite Bible is, quite clearly, the constitutions of 1408: he adds to that his own inferences therefrom, and a perfectly natural, but inaccurate guess, that the text of the actual Wycliffite Bible must have been heretical." His opinion as to the character of the Wycliffite Bible being quite worthless, how much value are we to attach to his opinion as to what these Bibles which he had seen may have been? He was merely demonstrating how dangerous it is for a shoemaker not to stick to his last, and for a layman to give an opinion on a question on which only an expert is fitted to judge. "More's authority," it has been shrewdly said, "as a historian, is less than his authority as a lawyer, and much less than his authority as a saint, with which it is sometimes confused. He had only

the linguistic and historical equipment of his contemporaries: much too little linguistic or historical knowledge to be able to assign an old English manuscript to a particular century." The summary of the whole matter of these imaginary pre-Wycliffite orthodox translations may be given in the words of Miss Deanesly. "To expect from Sir Thomas More, however, accurate historical or linguistic knowledge of the relation of the manuscripts he had seen to the Wycliffite Bible would be to expect an anachronism. His view as to the legal aspect of the matter was right: his scheme for the distribution of Bibles is most interesting evidence as to what the best mind of that day wished in the matter: his evidence as to contemporary belief in the absolute prohibition of all translations is valuable: but his theory as to the origin of such English Bibles as he had seen, though natural, was wrong. There is almost historical certainty that, though found in the houses of the faithful, they were the Wycliffite texts, *and that there was no important biblical translation, whole or partial, made in the fourteenth century before the days of Wycliffe's influence.*"

All this, however, interesting and important as it may be as bearing on the attitude of the Church towards translations of the Bible in Wycliffe's time, and conclusive as it may be with regard to the question of earlier translations, does not carry us any further with regard to the question of whether or not Wycliffe had any share in the translation which goes by his name. Opinion on this point has been sharply divided, as on other matters connected with the great reformer's life. Older opinion, which was practically unquestioned, ascribed the translation to him without any hesitation. Thus, as we have already seen, Sir Thomas More distinctly asserts that "the great arch heretic," Wycliffe, translated the Bible, corrupting the text for his own evil ends; and this, as we shall see, was the opinion generally held by people in authority and in possession of good means of information, at a period much nearer to Wycliffe's own time than that at which Sir Thomas More wrote.

On the other hand, present-day opinion has tended, until lately, to diminish the reformer's share in the work, until it has gone the length of practically denying that he had anything to do with it. Thus Mr. A. W. Pollard, in his Introduction to the Oxford Tercentenary Edition of the Authorised Version, writes: "That the reformer himself took any personal share in either of these versions which pass popularly under his name, is not likely, and in the case of the second is not seriously contended." "The authorship of the rest of this (earlier) version," he says again, "is unknown, and being unknown has been ascribed to Wyclif himself, with more piety than probability, since the master does not often take up the work of the disciple, and Wyclif, after June 1382, was both old and ill."

To begin with, no one, as Mr. Pollard states, seriously contends that Wycliffe had anything to do with the second edition of the translation that bears his name, in the sense of having actually set his hand to the work of translating. There remains the question of whether it was he who translated the rest of the Bible, from Baruch III, 20 to the end of the New Testament, after his disciple, Nicholas of Hereford, had been forced to flee, to avoid arrest on a charge of heresy. Mr. Pollard's reasons for withholding the latter part of the work from Wycliffe are not without weight, and are on the face of them sufficient to make it necessary to examine the available evidence as to authorship. That of More we have heard; and in all probability it may be discounted, for it is certain that he had no more evidence on the matter than we have ourselves, and probable that he had not so much; while we have seen how little weight can be attached to his judgment on ancient manuscripts of the Scriptures. But we have very important contemporary evidence to show that, in his own day, Wycliffe was believed, by men who were in the best position to know, to have had, at the very least, a very important share in the translation of the Wycliffite Bible. No man was so likely to be well informed as to the matter as Archbishop Arundel, one of the chief opponents

of Wycliffism and its translation of Scripture. The archbishop writes this in 1412 to Pope John XXIII (a very worthy head of the Church to be consulted on such a point) concerning "that wretched and pestilent fellow John Wycliffe, of damnable memory, that son of the old serpent, the very herald and child of anti-christ," that "to fill up the measure of his malice, he devised the expedient of a new translation of the scriptures into the mother tongue."

The continuator of Henry Knighton goes even further than the archbishop, though he has not his superior's facility in cursing heretics; and his testimony is particularly interesting from the fact that he was a canon of the abbey, St. Mary of the Meadows, at the same time as Hereford and Repingdon, two of the most prominent Wycliffites, of whom the former was actually the translator of the earlier part of the Bible, while Repingdon was abbot at a later stage, when the canon was still a member of the community. It is of interest also from the fact that his account gives us a typical example of the way in which the work of translation was regarded by an average Churchman, whose temperate language with regard to the great heretic shows him to have been a man of gentle and not unkindly nature.

"In those days," he writes, "flourished master John Wycliffe, rector of the church of Lutterworth, in the county of Leicester, the most eminent doctor of theology of those times. In philosophy he was reckoned second to none, and in scholastic learning without rival. . . .This master John Wycliffe translated into English (not, alas, into the tongue of angels) the gospel which Christ gave to doctors and clerks of the church, in order that they might sweetly minister it to laymen and weaker men . . . whence, through him, it is become more common and open to laymen, and to women who are able to read, than it is wont to be even to lettered clerks of good intelligence. Thus the pearl of the gospel is scattered abroad and trodden under foot of swine, and what is wont to be the treasure both of clerks and laymen is now become the jest of both. The jewel of clerks is turned into

the sport of the laity, so that that has become the 'commune æternum' of laymen, which heretofore was the heavenly talent of clerks and doctors of the Church." The unconscious revelation of this passage with regard to the attitude of the clerical mind of the time towards the use of Scripture is of great interest, apart altogether from the witness to the canon's opinion as to Wycliffe's work as a translator.

The testimony of John Hus, is, of course, only second-hand; but it is of importance as being a reflection of general English opinion of the time, and as coming from one whose own work was so closely connected with Wycliffe's. "It is said by the English," writes Hus, in 1411, "that Wycliffe himself translated the whole Bible from Latin into English." Thus it is evident that contemporary opinion, whether that of followers or opponents of Wycliffe, was unanimous in attributing to him the work of translation.

On the other hand the fact that the earlier version is obviously the work of more hands than one, and that we know Nicholas of Hereford to have been the translator of the Old Testament as far as Baruch III. 20, makes it impossible to ascribe the translation to him as a whole. The question as to whether we shall feel able to accept him as having a share in the work depends on whether Mr. Pollard's view as to the improbability of the master, in old age and sickness, continuing the work of the disciple, overweighs in our minds the contemporary opinions which have been quoted. On the whole, perhaps it is best to admit that absolute certainty is unattainable in the matter; but that there is no reason to treat the opinion that Wycliffe himself translated part of the Bible as other than a perfectly tenable one, though absolute proof may be unattainable.

To say this, however, is by no means to reduce Wycliffe's share in the translation to such small proportions as might appear. The evidence which may not suffice to demonstrate beyond a doubt that part of the early Wycliffe Bible is in the reformer's own words is entirely sufficient to demonstrate that he was behind the whole work, its inspirer

and instigator. The whole emphasis of Wycliffe's teaching is laid upon the necessity of God's Word being made known to the laity, not in the pitiful fragments which were doled out according to the caprice of clergy who were themselves too often incapable of rendering into English the Latin upon which they were supposed to base their teaching, but freely and completely. "Christ and his apostles," he said, "converted much people by uncovering of scripture, and this in the tongue which was most known to them . . . why then may not the modern disciples of Christ gather up the fragments of that same bread? The faith of Christ ought therefore to be recounted to the people in both languages." "No man," he said again, (is) "so rude a scholar but that he might learn the words of the gospel according to his simplicity." It is possible, though perhaps not probable, that Wycliffe never wrote a line of the translation which bears his name; but it is certain that he, more than any other man, was responsible for the translation, and that without him it would never have been undertaken or carried to completion.

"It will thus be seen," says Miss Deanesly, in words of which the first sentence has been already quoted, "that the evidence that the fourteenth-century English Bible was really due to Wycliffe is cumulative. There are the references to English translations in his works: there are the words of Arundel, the archbishop who lived through the five-and-twenty years of controversy about the validity of English Bibles, and who finally condemned the Wycliffite translations: there are the words of Knighton's continuator and Walden: there is more contemporary evidence as to authorship than any that could be found, for instance, to prove that Chaucer wrote the *Canterbury Tales*." "The statement," says the same authority again, referring to Hus's remark that the English said that Wycliffe himself translated the whole Bible into English, "the statement was substantially accurate. Englishmen of the day knew nothing as to whether the work was actually done by Wycliffe or his secretary: they said,

naturally enough, that it was 'Wycliffe's Bible.'" With such a statement we may rest content. The man who put the thought into the minds of other men; who not only did this, but insisted on every occasion upon the necessity of putting the thought into practice; who was the teacher of one whom we know to have been engaged upon the earlier version, and both the teacher and employer of the man who made the second; by what reason can there be denied to this man, even though we cannot prove that he wrote a sentence of the actual manuscript of the translation, the title of the author of the work? He was much more than "the only begetter" of it, in the Shakespearean sense: without him, it would never have come into being.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Wycliffe's Bible; Its Two Versions and their Characteristics

THE publication of Wycliffe's Bible, whether part of the work upon it was literally his, or whether he was only the motive power and the inspiration of the whole undertaking, was one of the most important incidents of our national history, not only because it marked the beginning of the religious struggle in our land which was never to know intermission until the principles of liberty triumphed at the Reformation, but because it marked the end of the old rule of scholasticism in human study, the new stage of unification which had been attained by our language, and a new epoch in our national religious development. For all these reasons it has been well described as being not merely a book, but an event; and when one attempts to realise something of its significance as the first indication of the shifting of the spiritual centre of gravity in the modern world, it is revealed as an event of first-class importance.

The date of the completion of the first of its two versions is generally given as 1382, the year after the Peasants' Rising; but as Hereford's flight took place in that year, and his work had only got as far in the Old Testament as Baruch III. 20, it is possible that the actual completion was not reached until 1384, the year of Wycliffe's death. Fortunately we possess the original manuscript of this version, as far as the end of Nicholas of Hereford's work at the verse mentioned above, where the text suddenly ends; while a contemporary copy of it which also breaks off at the same verse, has a note

written at the break—"Here ends the translation of Nicholas Hereford."

An examination of the original manuscript reveals the fact that it is written in five different hands, a fact which may be explained on the assumption that the writing was the work of several amanuenses, who took down the words of the actual translator, or on the other assumption that the translation was the work, not of Nicholas Hereford alone, but of a group of Wycliffe's disciples, of whom Nicholas Hereford was the last to be engaged upon the work up to the time of his flight. The latter supposition is rendered more likely by the fact that minor differences of dialect exist, corresponding to the different handwritings of the manuscript. It is extremely unlikely that each clerk who took down the words of a single translator turned the phrases dictated to him into his own local dialectal form before writing them down; the natural conclusion, therefore, would seem to be that the translation, so far as it goes in this manuscript, was not the work of Hereford alone, but of a "school of the prophets," under Wycliffe's inspiration, possibly under his guidance.

The translation, it must be remembered, is not from the original, either in the Old Testament or in the New. It is a rendering of Jerome's Vulgate—a translation of a translation; and, as was natural in what was, with all respect to Cardinal Gasquet, a first experiment, the rendering is of almost slavish literalness, following the Latin, as nearly as may be, word for word, and therefore, so far as English style is concerned, giving a poor translation. The translator's almost nervous desire to secure a literal rendering is seen in his translation of the Latin participles, where he retains the Latin participial usage, though it is entirely alien to the genius of the English speech, and makes extremely clumsy English. Thus, in Luke xxii. 8, "And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover," the first version reads "And he sente Petre and John, seyinge Ye goynge make redy pask to us." By the time that the second

version was being made, the translators, perfectly naturally also, had mustered up greater courage to deal with their material as true translators, and not as mere literalists, and the participles are rendered according to the spirit of the English speech—"And he sente Petre and Joon and seide, Go ye, and make ye redi to us the pask."

The conclusion of the version, after the flight of Hereford, has been ascribed, as we have seen, to Wycliffe himself. Whether it is so, remains, and probably always will remain, uncertain. There is no impossibility involved in the belief that the great leader was himself concerned in the work, though the probability of his being responsible for the whole of it seems small, in view of the dates and our knowledge of his state of health; but perhaps the safest conclusion is that Hereford's work was completed by some of Wycliffe's Oxford disciples, of whom John Purvey, his secretary, may have been the most prominent, working on lines which the reformer had suggested, and quite possibly under his supervision. "When Hereford fled the country, it would seem likely that the responsibility of completing the translation would have relapsed to the man who had instigated it, and to the young doctor (Purvey) who lived with him, and 'drank in his most secret teaching.'"

As a specimen of the first version of Scripture which has a right to be called The English Bible, we may take Hereford's rendering of the Twenty-third Psalm, which runs as follows: "The Lord Gouerneth me and no thing to me shal lacke; in the place of leswe where he me ful sette. Ouer watir of fulfilling he nurshide me; my soul he conuertide. He broughte down upon me the sties of rightwiseness; for his name. For whi and if I shal go in the myddel of the shadewe of deth; I shal not dreden euelis, for thou art with me. Thi yerde and thi staf; the han confortid me. Thou hast maad redi in thi sighte a bord; aghen them that trublyn me. Thou hast myche fatted in oile myn hed and my chalis makende ful drunken, hou right cler it is. And thi mercy shall vnderfolewe me; alle the dayis of my lif. And that I dwelle in the

hous of the Lord in to the lengthe of dayis." Obviously the language of this version is still far from being the rich and supple medium of thought which Shakespeare and the translators of the Authorised Version used; but it is equally manifest that there was now no reason why any person should find the Scripture beyond his intelligence when presented in such a rendering, which, even to-day, after more than five centuries of change in our speech, offers no great difficulties to a reader who brings to it the most ordinary patience.

Here again, is the Wycliffe version of the Lord's Prayer (St. Matthew VI.): "Oure fadir that art in heuenes, halwid be thi name, thi kingdom comme to, be thi wille done as in heuen so in erthe; gif to us this day oure breed ouer other substance, and forgeue to us our dettis as we forgeue to oure dettours, and leede us not in to temptacioun but delyuere us fro yuel." A comparison of this rendering with the version of King Alfred's day, given at the close of Chapter Six, will show, better than any comment, how far our speech had travelled between A.D. 900 and 1400.

Almost as soon as the first version of the Wycliffe Bible came to the light, it became manifest that its imperfections were such that revision was necessary. It is quite possible that its extreme devotion to absolute literalness of rendering was due to the fact that men's minds were not yet clear as to whether any other form of rendering was permissible or safe, in view of the extreme importance of accuracy and the weight of the issues which might hang upon the translation of a word. A little use of the literal translation must have made it clear that the advantages of literalism were outweighed by its disadvantages; and the second version is characterised by a much freer, though still scrupulously accurate, rendering of the text. The making of this revision has been very generally ascribed to John Purvey, whom we know to have been secretary to Wycliffe, and a man of distinguished scholarship, "doctor eximius" as he is called by the Carmelite friar Walden, "inquisitor-general of the faith to punish the Wycliffites." This attribution, like others

in the same connection, has been questioned, and Mr. Pollard has described it as a "mere guess;" reason, however, has since been shown to believe that the guess was perfectly accurate, and Purvey's authorship may now be accepted without hesitation.

The date of the completion of his work is a little doubtful. It has often been given as 1388, but may quite probably have been not earlier than 1395, in which year the *General Prologue* appears to have been written. No manuscript of this version can be dated before this year, and the earliest one of which the date is given is of 1397. Somewhere between 1388 and 1395, the work was completed, and by 1397 copies still extant were in circulation.

The *General Prologue*, which is prefixed to some copies of this version, is a work of singular interest—what in modern times would be called a frank piece of propaganda on behalf of the position that the reading of the Bible ought to be free to all men in the mother tongue. It opens with a statement about the canonical books of the Old Testament, then informs "men of simple wit" that the Bible is not too lofty and difficult a book for them to read, summarises the contents of all the books of the Old Testament and the lessons to be drawn from them, discusses the antiquated fourfold interpretation of Scripture, and closes with a justification of the translation of the Bible, a description of the author's own method in translating and an exhortation to faithfulness in the face of persecution. Purvey's description of his reasons and methods is so quaint and simple that it is worth while to give a little of it in his own words.

"For," he says, "though covetous clerks be wooed by simony, heresy, and many other sins to dispise and stop holy writ, as much as they may: yet the lewid (common) people crieth after holy writ, to con it, and keep it, with great cost and peril of their life.

For these reasons and other, with common charity, to save all men in our realm which God would have saved, a simple creature (himself) hath translated the Bible out of

Latin into English. First this simple creature had much travail, with divers helpers and fellows, to gather many old Bibles, and other doctors, and common glosses, and to make one Latin Bible somedeal true; and then to study it of the new, the text with the gloss, and other doctors as he might get, and specially Lyra (Nicholas de Lyra) on the Old Testament, that helped full much in this work; the third time to consel with old grammarians and old divines of hard words and hard sentences, how they might best be understood and translated; the fourth time to translate as clearly as he could to the sentence, and to have many good fellows and cunning at the correcting of the translation. . . . At the beginning I purposed, with God's help, to make the sentence as true and open in English as it is in the Latin, or more true and more open than it is in the Latin; and I pray, for charity and for common profit of Christian souls, that if any wise man find any default of the truth of translation, let him set in the true sentence and open of holy writ, but look that he examine truly his Latin Bible, for no doubt he shall find full many Bibles in Latin full false, if he look, namely (especially) many new; and the common Latin Bibles have more need to be corrected, as many as I have seen in my life, than hath the English Bible late translated" (Wycliffe's first version).

Purvey's work, thus described by him with a simplicity which has its own interest and charm, is more than a simple revision of the earlier translation. In several places it is evident that he used a Latin text varying from that which was used in the first version, as one would have expected from his statement about the need for checking the text of the Vulgate in view of the corruptions which had crept into it. His general principle in translation, as we have seen, is the substitution of essential accuracy of rendering for literal accuracy, or as he puts it, his translation is "a translation according to the sentence," while the first version was made, "according to the letter." The following parallel passages, giving the older and the newer renderings of

2 Samuel xxiii. 3–5, will exhibit the difference in style between the two.

	Hereford	Purvey
3.	He seyde, God of Yrael to me hath spokyn the strong of Yrael, the lordshipper of men, the rightwise lordshipper in the dreed of God.	*Dauid* seide, God of Israel spak to me, the stronge of Israel, the iust Lord of men, *is* Lord in the drede of God.
4.	As ligt of morwtide, springinge the sunne eerli with out clowdis, gliterith; and as bi reynes buriouneth (burgeoneth) the eerbe of the erthe.	As the ligt of the morewtid, whanne the sunne risith eerli, is brigt with out cloudis; and as an erbe cometh forth of the erthe bi reynes.
5.	And not so mych is myn hows anentis (with, the Scottish anent) God, that euerlastynge couenaunt he shulde goo yn with me, stable in alle thingis and warnysshit (strengthened) forsothe al myn heelth and al wil, ne is there eny thing of it, that ne buriowneth.	And myn hows is not so greet anentis God, that he schulde make with me euerlastynge couenaunt, stidefast and maad strong in all thingis; for al myn helthe *hangith of him* and al the wille *that is, al my desir, goith in to hym*, and no thing is therof, that makyth noy fruyt.

The differences in style between the two renderings are manifest. The earlier maintains the order of the Latin, sometimes to the clouding of the sense, while its fondness for the Latin participial form is seen in verse 4, "springinge the sunne eerli," where Purvey's revision reads "whanne the sunne risith eerli." But neither version presents any insurmountable difficulty to a modern student, though five centuries and a quarter have elapsed since the later of them was published.

Published is perhaps scarcely the right word to use in such

a connection. Anything like our modern publication, with an edition of several thousands thrown off by the printing-press and put into circulation at a given time all over the land, was, of course, a thing undreamt of at the end of the fourteenth century; and three quarters of a century were to pass before Caxton's press was set up at Westminster. It was not till as late as 1731 that even a part of the Wycliffite Bible was printed, while the first complete edition of it was not printed till 1850. The new English Bible was multiplied by the slow and laborious process of writing each individual copy by hand. Under such conditions it can be easily understood that its circulation must have been slow and limited, and its price, for some time, almost prohibitive. The price of a small Bible has been stated to be "cheap at forty shillings, i.e. the equivalent of thirty pounds in modern money." It is not surprising, therefore, that the manuscripts seldom contained the whole Bible, and that still fewer contained Purvey's General Prologue in addition to the sacred text. In spite of all difficulties, however, the book must have speedily reached a circulation surprisingly great for those days, to judge by the number of manuscripts still in existence. Forshall and Madden's great edition of 1850 was based on 170 manuscripts, of which 42 were of the older version; and since 1850 several more copies have come to light.

One striking peculiarity of the manuscripts is that about half of those now extant are of small size, showing that they were meant for people who would use them as their daily companions, and who were not able to afford the larger and more costly transcripts. On the other hand, some of the copies were finely executed, and belonged in their time to some of the highest in the land. The British Museum has a folio copy of the earlier volume written on vellum in two volumes, the first page of which shows in its illuminated border the armorial bearings of Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester, the youngest son of Edward III. A copy of the later version, with illuminated initials and borders,

once belonged to the library of Henry VII, and bears as its initial letter a red Tudor rose, the illuminated border containing the Tudor rose and portcullis. A third copy, now in the Bodleian, is said, but on doubtful authority, to have been made for Henry VI; while Purvey records, in connection with the death of Richard II's Queen, Anne of Bohemia, in 1394, that Archbishop Arundel said of the dead queen that "notwithstanding that she was an alien born, she had on English all the four gospellers, with the doctors upon them. And he said she had sent them unto him, and he said they were good and true, and commended her in that she was so great a lady, and also an alien, and would so lowlily study in so virtuous books."

Queen Anne thus read her English Gospels under episcopal license, and that the license of one who later was one of the most determined opponents of the circulation of the Bible in the vernacular. It is somewhat amusing to realise that "the four gospellers with the doctors upon them" which Arundel thus approved are almost certainly Purvey's "glossed Gospels," and that there was at least one heretical passage among the glosses which the Archbishop cannot have noticed. The fact that license was given to a Queen to read the Gospels in English is not surprising, though two years earlier the scribe who possibly wrote the very text which she was allowed to read was punished as a heretic. Anne had already read the Gospels in Latin, Czech, and German. Presumably, therefore, all the harm they could do her had already been done; in any case the distinction between queen and commoner was quite in accordance with the Roman practice in the matter.

Naturally, however, it was to the commoner that the new revelation of the Word of God made the greatest appeal. Members of the royal house, or nobles of the land, could, or at least some of them could, read the Bible in the Vulgate, or, if they were not learned enough for that, had access to better sources of instruction than the unlearned parish priests could give them; but to the common folk, this gift

of the Bible in their own speech meant the opening of a new world. Almost at once, the effect became so conspicuous that the Church took fright. As early as 1389, Archbishop Courtenay came down to Leicester, which, as being near to Lutterworth, the very nest of Wycliffism, was quickly infected with the new poison, and solemnly cursed, with bell, book, and candle, all those who favoured the views of Wycliffe. The town was laid under an interdict until it should purge itself of its heresy. On the 7th November the sheriff was ordered to arrest eight persons who had been excommunicated for their heresy, and on three of them recanting, they were ordered to do penance.

On the following Sunday, they were to go before the Cross three times during the procession of Our Lady of Leicester at the Cathedral Church. They were to be dressed in their shirts, with no other garment, and were to hold a crucifix in one hand, and a wax candle of half a pound weight in the other. This edifying performance being completed, greatly, no doubt, to the spiritual upbuilding of the faithful in Leicester, it was to be followed by another, equally profitable, in which the three heretics were to stand during the time of full market the following Saturday in the market-place, in the same garb, and with the same adornments. Roger Dexter, William Smith, and Alice, his wife, having submitted to these punishments for the heinous crime of reading the Gospel in their own tongue, were duly absolved by November 17th, 1389, the absolution, no doubt, doing them as much good as the penance had presumably done at such a suitable season of the year.

This was a beginning; it was to be followed by a more systematic attack upon the new heresy of Bible-reading. At a Convocation of the Province of Canterbury, held at Oxford 1407–08, under the presidency of Archbishop Arundel, who had succeeded Courtenay, the famous "Constitutions of Oxford" were passed. The seventh of these ran as follows: "The Holy Scripture not to be translated into the vulgar tongue, nor a translation to be expounded, until it shall have

been duly examined, under pain of excommunication and the stigma of heresy.

Moreover it is a perilous thing, as the Blessed Jerome testifies, to translate the text of Holy Scripture from one idiom into another, inasmuch as in the translations themselves it is no easy matter to keep the same meaning in all cases, like as the Blessed Jerome, albeit inspired, confesses that he often went astray in this respect. We therefore enact and ordain that no one henceforth on his own authority translate any text of Holy Scripture into the English or other language, by way of a book, pamphlet, or tract, and that no book, pamphlet, or tract of this kind be read, either already recently composed in the time of the said John Wyklyff, or since then, or that may in future be composed, in part or in whole, publicly or privily, under pain of the greater excommunication, until the translation itself shall have been approved by the diocesan of the place or if need be by a provincial council. Whosoever shall do the contrary to be punished in like manner as a supporter of heresy and error." Those who remember that, as late as 1360, the Pope had approved of the appointment of a Bishop in England who did not know his letters, will realise how admirable was the security against error given by the approval of such a diocesan, and how well grounded his condemnation of any translation was sure to be.

The battle between the new light of a vernacular Bible, and the obscurantism which wished to keep the Word of God as the special preserve of the clergy, was now fairly joined, and for a century and a quarter the English Bible was a forbidden book to the laity, unless the layman or woman happened to be one of the great ones of the earth. In spite of the interdict laid upon Bible reading, however, and the uncompromising severity with which any breach of the interdict was punished, the attempt to repress the truth was as futile as all such attempts have proved to be. The number of manuscripts of the Wycliffite translation still extant proves how zealously it must have been copied and sought after;

and the fact that a book both so costly and so dangerous to its possessors was multiplied to such an extent bears witness to the thirst of the common folk of England for the Word in a form which all could understand. It has been the fashion of late years to sneer at the risks run by those who read the vernacular Bible in pre-Reformation days, and to deride the picture of the persecuted Lollard reading the precious chapters in fear and trembling as a figment of the imagination. The assumption of such a position requires a considerable amount of assurance in face of the registers of the trials of the men and women accused of Lollardy, in which special mention is made of the reading or committing to memory of the Scriptures as one of the chief counts against the heretics at the bar.

It is true that the earlier leaders of the Wycliffite party, after their leader's death, failed to show themselves of the stuff of which martyrs are made. Hereford, the first of Wycliffe's translators, found Church preferment more to his mind than the stake, and ended as a Church dignitary and a persecutor of his former associates; Repingdon, one of the keenest of Wycliffe's Oxford disciples, became in more prosperous days a bitter persecutor, and reaped a sufficiently notable harvest of clerical preferment—Abbot of St. Mary of the Meadow, 1394; Chancellor of Oxford University, 1397, 1400–2; Chaplain and Confessor to Henry IV; Bishop of Lincoln, 1405; Cardinal, 1408. Even John Purvey recanted in 1401, though he afterwards repented of his weakness. We need not wonder at such defections. It was then a new thing to withstand the organised power of the Roman Church.

Further, some of these first leaders were men unfitted by the very completeness of their scholarly equipment, as such a thing was then understood, to put their lives on the hazard of a single truth. Scholasticism, with its love of endless distinguishing and dividing of "a hair 'twixt south and south-west side," was not the best ground for the rearing of a will that can say—"Here I stand; I can do no other."

Add to this the sudden shock of witnessing the first burnings for heresy in England. Sawtre was burnt as a Lollard in 1400; in 1401, the hateful statute *De Haeretico Comburendo* was passed, and the burning of Sir John Oldcastle and others showed that it was not meant to be a dead letter. Small wonder, if men shrank from a risk so horrible and so unnerving. It may not be possible to admire John Phips for saying that "he would rather burn his books than that his books should burn him;" but at least it is easy to sympathise with him. The Wars of the Roses brought some measure of relief to the hunted Wycliffites, for England had not sufficient energy for religious strife on the top of civil war; and the generation of Lollards which came after the wars proved to be of sterner stuff then the earliest sowers of the seed. From the beginning of the sixteenth century, the witness to the risks run, and the penalties endured by Englishmen and women for the sake of being able to read God's Word for themselves, is manifold and unquestionable, resting, as it does, on the episcopal records of Sees such as London, Lincoln, and Hereford. Some of these records of suffering for the truth's sake are strangely moving and pathetic, all the more so because pathos is the last thing aimed at in them. Christopher the Shoemaker is accused of Lollardy because "he read to John Say out of a little book the words which Christ spake to his disciples;" James Brewster is burned in 1511, because, among other equally heinous sins, he had "a certain little book of scripture in English, of an old writing almost worn with age;" and in the same year William Sweeting was charged with "having much conference with one William Man, of Boxted, in a book which was called Matthew" (the Evangelist, seemingly, being a stranger to the recorder). Nicholas Durdant "used to read to others parts of the epistles of St. Paul, and the gospels: and he had desired those assembled not to tell that he had any such English books in his house, lest he should be burned for the same;" while Richard Butler was charged with having at sundry times "erroneously and

damnably read aloud in a great book of heresy of Robert Durdant's certain chapters of the Evangelists in English, containing in them divers erroneous and damnable opinions and conclusions of heresy."

Most touching of all are the records of those who, not being able to afford Bibles of their own, committed to memory parts of Scripture, and taught them to others, and were indicted before the ordained ministers of God's Word for a crime so outrageous. Thomas Chase was charged with having been "heard by James Morden to recite twice the Epistle of St. James and the first chapter of St. Luke." His teacher had been a woman, Agnes Ashford, who was taxed with teaching him part of the Sermon on the Mount—"Five times he went to the aforesaid Agnes to learn this lesson. . . . These lessons the said Agnes was bidden to recite before six bishops, who straightway enjoined and commanded her that she should teach those lessons no more to any man, and especially not to her children." One would have imagined that six bishops might have found something more worthy of their doing as servants of Jesus Christ than bullying one poor woman and forbidding her to teach her children the words of Him Who said "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not!" Of one Alice Collins, a married woman, it is recorded—"This Alice was a famous woman among them, and had a good memory, could recite much of the Scriptures and other good books; and therefore, when any conventicle of these men did meet at Burford, commonly she was sent for, to recite unto them the declaration of the Ten Commandments, and the Epistles of Peter and James."

There is no need to multiply instances of how men and women were tried and punished with steady malignity for doing what to us appears the most elementary of Christian duties. To mention the name of John Foxe to-day is almost as hazardous as it was to name John Bunyan in Cowper's time. Perhaps the reason is that truth is seldom popular, and least of all with those who oppose it. All the same, Foxe

Photo *The Medici Society*

THE BIBLE OF THE POOR FOLK IN THE MIDDLE AGES

Scene of the Last Judgment. From the Porch of the North Transept of Rheims Cathedral.

said no more than the truth in his summing up of this matter. "Certes the fervent zeal of those Christian days seemed much superior to these of our days and times; as manifestly may appear by their sitting up all night in reading and hearing; also by their expenses and charges in buying of books in English, of whom some gave five marks (£30–40) some more, some less for a book: some gave a load of hay for a few chapters of St. James or of St. Paul in English. . . . To see their travails, their earnest seekings, their burning zeal, their readings, their watchings, their sweet assemblies, their love and concord, their godly living, their faithful demeaning with the faithful, may make us now, in these our days of free profession, to blush for shame." It is easy to mock at Foxe's devout phraseology; but it would be well for us to remember that it is because there once was a time when such words were not cant and hypocrisy, but living reality, that our land is what it is, spite of all its faults, to-day.

BOOK FOUR

THE BIBLE IN ENGLAND: THE BREAKING OF THE DAY

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The Revival of Learning in Europe

BETWEEN the completion of Wycliffe's Bible and the first appearance of Tyndale's New Testament, there lies a period of about a century and a quarter, fraught with events which were fated to be of the utmost importance in the shaping of the future destiny of Europe, intellectually and spiritually. The pivotal incident of the period occurs rather less than half-way through it, when in 1453 the Turks stormed Constantinople, thereby not only bringing to a sudden close the decrepit Eastern Empire, but (what was far more important) scattering abroad over all Europe the treasures of Classical art and literature of which Constantinople had for so long been the storehouse, and the Greek scholars who had found their home in the capital of the Eastern Cæsars. It is difficult for us, to whom the great gift of Greece has been common for so long, to realise what the first revelation of it meant to the Western world, to which Greek culture had become almost a forgotten thing; but the name by which the new apocalypse became known suggests at least something of the wonder with which it was received. It was the Renaissance, the New Birth of the human mind and spirit; and if the sack of Constantinople was a sowing in tears, the harvest of the seed so widely scattered was, for a time at all events, a reaping in joy.

There are few aspects of human history so charming or so picturesque as those which show us the new enthusiasm for learning, for art, for beauty of all sorts, which sprang up in every little Italian court and city and made men and women more eager for knowledge than for their daily bread. The unfortunate thing was that in Italy, where the seed was first sown, the harvest which it bore was almost exclusively one of an enlightened paganism.

The Italian society, noble or churchly, which was moved to its depths by the discovery of a Greek manuscript or a Greek torso, and would debate from sunset to sunrise on questions of the good and beautiful as revealed in Plato, cared nothing for the deeper revelation of truth which came to it from those other Greek sources in the books of the New Testament. Nay the more thoroughly it became imbued with the spirit of classic Greek, the less liking it had for the Greek of the Gospels and the Epistles, which seemed merely barbarous beside the polished beauty of the Attic philosophers.

Consequently, the Renaissance had nothing to say to the Church in its Italian home, and the period of the Renaissance is a period when corruption, luxury, and all manner of evil were not only rampant in civil society, but were openly indulged in by the heads of the Church. Burke has spoken of a period when "vice lost half its evil by losing all its grossness." Few falser or more dangerous words have ever been uttered; but during the Renaissance, it seemed as though the leaders of Italy, civil and religious alike, had come to the conclusion that sin was no longer sin, so long as it was beautiful. This, therefore, is the period when, instead of witnessing that Reformation from within for which the best men in the Church had long been crying and praying, the chair of St. Peter was occupied by an unspeakable scoundrel and beast such as Alexander VI, and when Leo X, on his election to his sacred charge, could say—"Since God has given Us the Papacy, let Us enjoy it."

Fortunately for the world, the rest of Europe, and

especially the northern nations of the Teutonic stock, found in the Revival of Learning something more worthy and more enduring than the beautiful and polished paganism which became the mark of enlightenment in Italy, and which Browning has embodied for us with such wit and truth in "The Bishop orders his Tomb at St. Praxed's Church." The sterner and more serious genius of the North was less concerned with the revelations of beauty and of the joy and pride of life which intoxicated its southern sister than with the possibility, now disclosed, of making a closer approximation to the actual truth of the Word of God, through a more thorough knowledge of the language in which the words of Jesus Christ and His Apostles were first communicated to the world. Just as, in Italy, the first result of the Renaissance was the awakening of a passion for beauty of all sorts, so, in the North its first fruit was the arousing of an intense desire to get back to the *ipsissima verba* of Our Lord and His chosen representatives, and to attempt the regulation of life by them, and not any longer by clerical traditions. If in Italy the new divinity was Plato, in the North He was Jesus Christ, speaking through His own Word to the heart and the intelligence of every man who had ears to hear.

And this, of course, inevitably meant the Reformation, as we know it, as distinct from the possible reformation for which the best men in the Church had long been hoping and yearning. No doubt the Reformation was bound to come in some more or less violent form at last. The corruption of the Papacy, its undisguised worldliness, most of all its stubborn determination to resist all reform, would inevitably have produced rebellion in the end, and were, in point of fact, steadily producing it in men who were gradually awakening to the sense of their own powers and rights, and the consciousness of the rightness of civil and intellectual freedom. Men were now no longer prepared to submit indefinitely to the dominance of a caste which intellectually was rapidly falling from its former position of superiority,

to a position of not less marked inferiority, and which was, in many instances, becoming morally despicable in the eyes of the best men. The time had been when the ideals of the Church were revered by the rest of the world, even when they were not acted upon, because they were so much higher than those of the world. The case was now reversed, and the ideals of the best leaders of the world were considerably higher than those of the Churchmen who claimed spiritual and temporal dominion over them. Such a condition of unstable equilibrium could not continue; and if the Church was not prepared to justify her claims to rule by showing herself worthy of reverence and authority, men were no longer prepared to submit to her dominance.

All this tendency, however, was immensely strengthened, and the whole problem hurried towards a far more immediate solution, by the Revival of Learning. For the appeal of those who had long been clamouring for a reformation of the Church now became, so to speak, an appeal from Philip drunk to Philip sober, from a Church intoxicated with power, pleasure, and self-sufficiency, to the Church as it was in the beginning, under the guidance of its great Master and His first followers. Men turned from Papal decrees and the decisions of Church councils whose composition and conduct had been notoriously such as to make their claim to have the mind of Christ a mere offence in the nostrils of all decent folk, to see for themselves what Jesus Christ and His Apostles had to say on the matters about which question had arisen. Consequently one of the supreme issues which came to be thrashed out in the Reformation struggle was whether the guide of human life should be a pure Bible, or a more or less corrupt Church.

The new learning made it possible, for the first time, to have access to a comparatively pure text of Scripture, instead of to one which was itself, at best, only a version, and which had gradually been subjected to all the corruptions that inevitably creep into a text which has to be preserved for centuries by the painful and inaccurate processes of manual

copying. This purer text could now be maintained in its purity by the facilities which the new invention of printing offered towards the attainment of greater accuracy in the production of copies. From this point, therefore, the Bible, to which reformers like John Wycliffe and John Hus had already been appealing as the true arbiter in questions of life and doctrine, comes to the front as the foundation of the one party and the stumbling-block of the other; and one of the chief aspects of the earlier stages of the Reformation conflict is the question of whether the laity should or should not have free access to the Word of God in their national speech.

The great awakening of the Renaissance was naturally somewhat later in reaching England; but when it did arrive on our shores the result was profound. An English scholar has well summed up the aspect of the awakening which appealed most strongly to England in the sentence, "Greece had risen from the grave with the New Testament in her hand:" and it was this gift that was most eagerly grasped and most highly prized, though the other treasures of the Revival of Learning were highly valued by a society which was cultured enough to win the high approval of Erasmus. Greek was first taught at Oxford in 1491, by William Grocyn, who had learned it in Italy, and Grocyn was followed as a Hellenist by men like Linacre, Thomas More, and John Colet, the founder of St. Paul's School.

Colet was the type of Churchman who would have saved the Church the agonies and strife of the Reformation, had his counsel and example only been listened to and followed. In the face of fierce opposition on the part of the obscurantist majority of Churchmen, he was lecturing at Oxford to crowded audiences upon St. Paul's Epistles, bringing the real meaning of the Scriptures to the ears of men to whom his teaching was like new life. In 1497 Erasmus, then in the first blush of his immense fame, paid a visit to England, and could scarcely find words to express his admiration of the land, and the cultured and broad-minded scholars whom he met. He

came in December; but he pays our climate a compliment such as it has seldom received from a foreigner—"The air is soft and delicious. The men are sensible and intelligent. Many of them are even learned and not superficially either. They know their classics, and so accurately that I have lost little in not going to Italy.

When Colet speaks I might be listening to Plato. . . . The number of young men who are studying ancient literature here is astonishing." It was not to be long before the great Dutch scholar was to make his own vital contribution to the elements which were agitating men's minds in Northern Europe.

In 1516 Erasmus published, through the printer Froben of Basle, the first edition of his Greek New Testament, which was in part the fruit of his leisure during the five years, 1509–1514, in which he held a professorship of Divinity at Cambridge, and which is the first printed edition of the Greek Testament that was ever given to the world. It is in this fact that its supreme importance lies. From the point of textual accuracy, Erasmus's edition was of comparatively small value; for he used only five manuscripts in the preparation of it, and of these only one, which was also the least used, was as early as the tenth century, while that on which he most relied was as late as the fifteenth. The vital point was here, that now the actual words of Our Lord and His Apostles were offered to the whole world in a form easy to procure and to multiply, and backed by the authority of the man who was incomparably the most famous scholar of the time. Henceforward obscurantism might do its utmost to keep the Bible out of the hands of the laity—in vain; its battle was already lost.

"I totally dissent," wrote Erasmus in his Preface, "from those who are unwilling that the sacred Scriptures, translated in the vulgar tongue, should be read by private individuals. I would wish even all women to read the Gospel and the Epistles of St. Paul. I wish they were translated into all languages of the people. I wish that the husbandman might

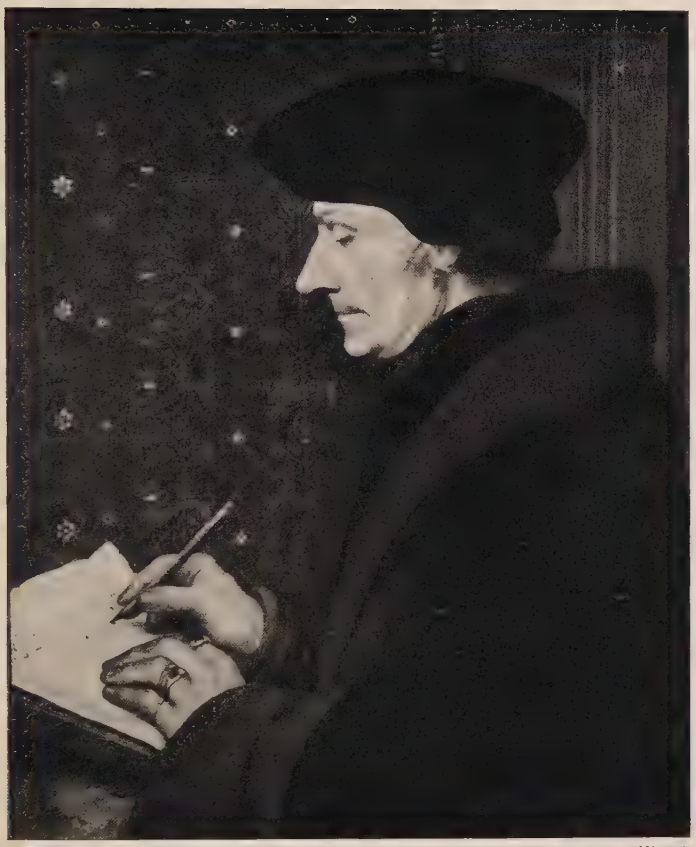


Photo *Alinari*

ERASMUS, BY HOLBEIN

One of the great portraits of the world. The man who, more than any other, made a vernacular Bible possible.

sing parts of them at his plough, and the weaver at his shuttle, and that the traveller might beguile with their narration the weariness of his way." This is something different from Sir Thomas More's carefully fenced-about scheme for allowing the bishop to present a few copies of the Bible to selected members of his flock; and one can only regret that Erasmus had not succeeded in inoculating his friend with something of his own broad-mindedness. What he had done, of course, was still a long way from presenting the laity with a vernacular New Testament; but at least it can be said that the publication of Erasmus's Greek Testament rendered a vernacular New Testament inevitable.

We are often informed that it was not the text of Scripture which was objected to by the bishops and other enthusiasts for an ignorant laity, but the heretical and insulting notes which were added to the text by the translators, and also that it is a shameful libel on the Church to accuse it of corruption. It may be of interest to glance for a moment at one or two of the notes which Erasmus, a Churchman and a friend of Churchmen and of Popes, who might have had a bishopric or a Cardinal's hat almost at any time of his maturity, thought fit to place in his edition of the New Testament. Writing on 1 Corinthians XIV. 19 (of unknown tongues) he says: "St. Paul says he would rather speak five words with a reasonable meaning in them than ten thousand in an unknown tongue. They chant now in our churches in what is an unknown tongue and nothing else, while you will not hear a sermon once in six months telling people to amend their lives." On Matthew XXIV. 23, "Lo, here is Christ," he writes: "We hear the monks everywhere shouting (I speak of the superstitious, not of the pious) 'Lo, here is Christ'—yet neither do they agree among themselves. . . . The order of St. James cry 'Christ is here, he is not among the Augustinians.' Again the Benedictines clamour 'Christ is here, he is not among the Mendicants.' Finally all this crowd shouts 'Christ is here; he is not among the priests who don't wear the cowl.' But what says Christ himself?

'Do not believe them.'" His comment on Ephesians v. 4, would be almost incredible, did it not come from a devout Catholic. "Monks and priests," he says, "have a detestable trick of burlesquing Scripture. When they wish to be specially malicious, they take the Magnificat or the Te Deum and introduce infamous words into it, making themselves as hateful when they would be witty as when they are serious."

One other quotation gives us very plain speaking on a subject on which Protestants are often accused of having maligned innocent and holy men. No one has ever contended that celibacy has not often given to the world men of the highest purity and the noblest spirituality; but here is the candid opinion of its average fruits, pronounced by one who had perhaps the clearest eyes in Europe, and who had more opportunities than most men of his time of learning the simple truth of what he was talking about. Speaking about the passage Matthew xix. 12, "There be eunuchs which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake," he remarks: "Men are threatened or tempted into vows of celibacy. They may have license to go with harlots, but they must not marry wives. They may keep concubines and remain priests. If they take wives, they are thrown to the flames. Parents who design their children for a celibate priesthood should emasculate them in their infancy, instead of forcing them, reluctant or ignorant, into a furnace of licentiousness." If these words had been uttered by a Reformer!

The sensation caused by the appearance of Erasmus's New Testament was amazing. "It was finished at last," says Froude, "text and translation printed, and the living facts of Christianity, the persons of Christ and the Apostles, their history, their lives, their teaching were revealed to an astonished world. For the first time the laity were able to see side by side, the Christianity which converted the world, and the Christianity of the Church with a Borgia Pope, cardinal princes, ecclesiastical courts, and a mythology of lies. The effect was to be a spiritual earthquake. . . . Never

was volume more passionately devoured. A hundred thousand copies were soon sold in France alone. The fire spread, as it spread behind Samson's foxes in the Philistines' corn. The clergy's skins were tender from long immunity. They shrieked from pulpit and platform, and made Europe ring with their clamour. The louder they cried the more clearly Europe perceived the justice of their chastisement. The words of the Bible have been so long familiar to us that we can hardly realise what the effect must have been when the Gospel was brought out fresh and visible before the astonished eyes of mankind."

It is difficult for us, as Froude says, to appreciate how such an effect could be produced by the issue of what, after all, was still a book for scholars. The point is just this—that the appearance of Erasmus's New Testament was the first step in the process of restoring the Word of God to the place of honour from which it had been thrust down by that dominance of ceremonial which had held religion in slavery for so many centuries. The first step, necessarily, was the giving back of the real text of the New Testament to the men who were now, for the first time, able to test its truth for themselves by their newly acquired knowledge of the ancient language in which it was first written. Once the scholar had in his hands the treasure, it would not be long before it was communicated to the unlearned in the native speech of his own land.

How much of the Bible the Church of the pre-Reformation time gave to the layman is perhaps best summed up by Froude, whose witness, though his name be anathema to many who know nothing about him except that it is fashionable to abuse him, simply corroborates what is amply proved from other sources. "The Christian religion as taught and practised in Western Europe, consisted of the Mass and the Confessional, of elaborate ceremonials, rituals, processions, pilgrimages, prayers to the Virgin and the saints, with dispensations and indulgences for laws broken or duties left undone. Of the Gospels and Epistles so much only was

known to the laity as was read in the Church services, and that intoned as if to be purposely unintelligible to the understanding. Of the rest of the Bible, nothing was known at all, because nothing was supposed to be necessary, and lectures like Colet's at Oxford were considered superfluous and dangerous."

A New Testament which was circulated, albeit in the original tongue, by tens of thousands among all men, clerical or lay, who could read Greek, was as great a novelty to the Europe of the first quarter of the sixteenth century as the discovery of the New World had been twenty-five years before. And, like the great discovery of Columbus, the rediscovery of the Bible was to be seminal, and to produce a harvest whose magnitude none could foresee.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The Struggle for a People's Bible. i. Tyndale's First Venture

WE have seen how greatly Erasmus was charmed by the zeal for learning which he found in England, to say nothing of the other attractions which he found in the country. "If you are a wise man," he writes to Anderlin during his first visit, "you will cross the Channel yourself. A witty gentleman like you ought not to waste his life among those French *merdes*. If you knew the charms of this country your ankles would be winged, or if the gout was in your feet you would wish yourself Daedalus." But the idyllic picture drawn by the great scholar of the conquest of England by the new learning was not destined to endure for long. It soon became manifest that the great object to which the new command of Greek was going to be devoted in England was not, as in Italy, the resuscitation and elucidation of pagan authors, but the translation of the New Testament into the speech of the common folk. Immediately the obscurantist part of the Church, absolutely insignificant from the point of scholarship, and in most cases utterly devoid of any other claim to respect, but supremely powerful from the point of view of influence, and the mere mass and weight of numbers and united ignorance, began to protest against such a use of the newly acquired knowledge. It was a repetition of the fundamental objection of the Roman priesthood to a vernacular Bible, as tending to reduce the dominion of the priesthood over the minds of the commonalty—the characteristic attitude of priesthoods in all ages. The teaching and the learning of Greek were

denounced and proscribed, because the clergy knew well enough that they would lead inevitably to the thing which they most dreaded. What a really enlightened Catholic thought of such an attitude we may read in the letters of Erasmus. "It may happen," he says, "it does often happen that an abbot is a fool or a drunkard. He issues an order to the brotherhood in the name of holy obedience. And what will such order be? An order to enforce chastity? An order to be sober? An order to tell no lies? Not one of these things. It will be that a brother is not to learn Greek; he is not to seek to instruct himself. He may be a sot. He may go with prostitutes. He may be full of hatred and malice. He may never look into the Scriptures. No matter. He has not broken any oath. He is an excellent member of the community. While if he disobeys such a command as this from an insolent superior, there is stake or dungeon for him instantly."

In spite of such vehement opposition, the first printed New Testament in English was to be in circulation within a few years of the time at which Erasmus wrote these words, and indeed, when he wrote them the man who was to be its translator was already preparing himself for his task. If John Wycliffe deserves to be remembered as the originator of the first English Bible, William Tyndale deserves to be held in no less honour as the man who, more than any other, is responsible for the first creation of an English Bible translated, not from the Latin, but direct from the original tongues, and to whom we owe not only indirectly our possession of our English Bible of to-day, but directly the very phrases, cadences, and turns of expression of a very considerable portion of that Authorised Version which is so cherished a possession of the English race.

Tyndale, of course, did not live to complete his work, though he translated the whole of the New Testament, and a considerable part of the Old; but it has been estimated that of those portions which he did translate, our Authorised Version retains about eighty per cent in the Old Testament,

and about ninety per cent in the New. If the extraordinarily high level of attainment represented by the Authorised Version be considered, it will be seen at once how high a rank as scholar, translator, and master of the English language, must be assigned to the Oxford graduate whose work, accomplished during twelve years of exile and danger, and under the constant menace of a violent death, has so remarkably stood the test. It may safely be said that no other scholar has ever had so high a tribute of praise given to him as the translators of the Authorised Version offered to Tyndale by the incorporation of so much of his work in the Version which represented the best learning of a century later than his great effort, and which still, after three centuries more, remains unchallenged as a masterpiece of learning and of English prose.

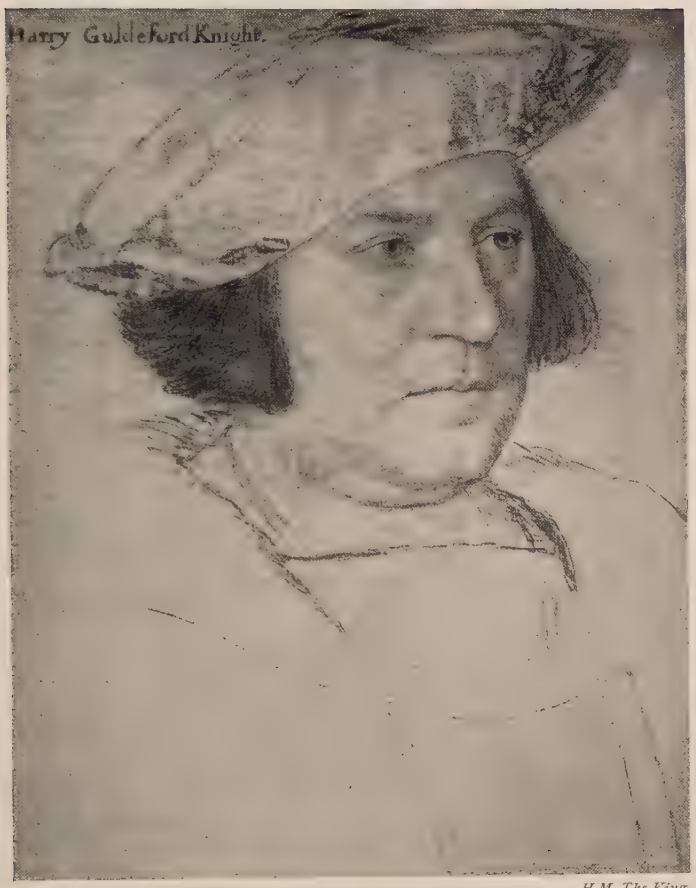
William Tyndale, to whom such honour has tardily come, was born probably in the year 1484, a year after Martin Luther. The place of his birth is doubtful, and North Nibley and Slymbridge, both in Gloucestershire, alike lay claim to the honour of having given him to his country. For more than two-thirds of his life the only account of him that we possess is given by John Foxe in the *Acts and Monuments*.

He "was born," says the martyrologist, "about the borders of Wales, and brought up from a child in the University of Oxford, where he, by long continuance, grew up and increased as well in the knowledge of tongues and other liberal arts, as especially in the knowledge of the Scriptures, whereunto his mind was singularly addicted. Insomuch that he, lying then at Magdalen Hall, read privily to certain students and fellows of Magdalen College some parcel of divinity, instructing them in the knowledge and truth of the Scriptures. Whose manners and conversation, being correspondent to the same, were such that all they which knew him reputed and esteemed him to be a man of most virtuous disposition and of life unspotted. Thus he, in the University of Oxford, increasing more and more in learning and proceeding in degrees of the schools, spying his time, removed

from thence to the University of Cambridge, where after he had likewise made his abode a certain space, being now further ripened in the knowledge of God's word, leaving that university also he resorted to one Master Welch, a knight of Gloucestershire."

A good deal depends on what stress we are to lay upon Foxe's phrase "from a child." Attendance at the Universities quite commonly began, in those days, much earlier than is now usual, and often continued much later. Therefore, though it has been contended that Tyndale cannot have heard Dean Colet lecturing at Oxford, as the Dean went to London in 1505, there is nothing impossible in the belief that he may have listened to the friend of Erasmus for at least a couple of sessions, perhaps more, as in 1503 he would have been nineteen. On the other hand, the fact that apparently he did not take his degree at Oxford till 1515 effectually prevents us from picturing him as sitting at the feet of Erasmus during the great Dutchman's tenure of the chair of divinity at Cambridge; for that tenure came to an end in 1514, when Tyndale was still an undergraduate at Oxford. However that may be, there can be little doubt of his having imbibed the influence of both Colet and Erasmus, so that when he left Cambridge, where he had taken a degree in divinity, he was a pronounced disciple of the new school of free interpretation of Scripture. Ere long he manifested his tendencies in this direction in a manner which won for him anything but approval from the Church dignitaries of the district where he found himself.

"Master Tyndale," says Foxe, whose vivid narrative we may follow for a little, "being in service with one Master Welch, a knight who married a daughter of Sir Robert Pointz, a knight dwelling in Gloucestershire, the said Tyndale being schoolmaster to the said Master Welch's children, and being in good favour with his master, sat most commonly at his own table, which kept a good ordinary, having resort to him many times divers great beneficed men, as abbots, deans, archdeacons, and other divers doctors and learned



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SIR HARRY GUILDFORD

By Holbein

It was this jovial Controller of King Henry's Household who introduced Tyndale to Bishop Tunstall of London.

men. Amongst whom commonly was talk of learning, as well of Luther and Erasmus Roterodamus as of opinions in the Scripture. The said Master Tyndale, being learned, and which had been a student of divinity in Cambridge, and had therein taken degree of school, did many times therein show his mind and learning, wherein as those men and Tyndale did vary in opinions and judgments, then Master Tyndale would show them on the book the places, by open and manifest Scripture. The which continued for a certain season divers and sundry times, until in the continuance thereof these great beneficed doctors waxed weary, and bare a secret grudge in their hearts against Master Tyndale."

Foxe's picture of the theological discussions around the hospitable board of Sir John Walsh, at Little Sodbury, is not only a quaint piece of narrative, but also a thoroughly characteristic picture of the times. At what other period of our history would the guests of one of our Squire Westerns be found discussing the merits or demerits of "Erasmus Roterodamus" over their ale or wine? We have a companion picture from two centuries later of Sir Robert Walpole entertaining his guests, and we know the kind of talk which the great statesman found to be the only universally popular kind. The controversial theology of the sixteenth-century knight's table is just as characteristic of the time as the muck with which the eighteenth-century statesman used to entertain his guests is of his day.

"Great lords and great ladies don't love to have their mouths stopped," said Dr. Johnson once, explaining his lack of popularity with the higher ranks of society. Neither did "great beneficed men, as abbots, deans, archdeacons" and the like, love to have their mouths stopped, even though the stopping was done with a text. It must have been intensely irritating for Church dignitaries to find themselves confuted by a poor usher, who would insist on showing them chapter and verse for his opinions. Human nature being what it is, one need hardly wonder that these "great beneficed doctors bare a secret grudge in their hearts against Master Tyndale."

The grudge resulted in a summons to the Welsh knight's tutor to appear before the bishop's chancellor. "So he being there before them, they laid sore to his charge, saying he was a heretic in sophistry, a heretic in logic, a heretic in his divinity, and so continueth. But they said unto him, 'You bear yourself boldly (because) of the gentlemen here in this country, but you shall be otherwise talked with!' Then Master Tyndale answered them: 'I am content that you bring me where you will into any country within England, giving me ten pounds a year to live with, so you bind me to nothing but to teach children and to preach!' Then had they nothing more to say to him, and thus he departed and went home to his master again."

It must have been pretty clear, however, to "Master Tyndale," that his immunity could not continue for long, and that he was not only risking his own safety, but that of his master as well by continuing in Sodbury, if he were also to continue in his plain speaking. How plain that speaking was, is shown us by another of Foxe's anecdotes about him. "Soon after Master Tyndale happened to be in the company of a learned man, and in communing and disputing with him drove him to that issue that the learned man said, 'We were better be without God's law than the Pope's.' Master Tyndale hearing that, answered him, 'I defy the Pope and all his laws,' and said, 'If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth the plough shall know more of the Scripture than thou doest!'" Erasmus, you remember, said very much the same; but Erasmus had not the least intention of risking his own skin to bring about the accomplishment of his ideal. Tyndale was of different stuff, and nobly redeemed his pledge in the few years that were granted to him before he went to the stake at Vilvorde.

"To be short," says Foxe, "M. Tyndal, being so molested and vexed in the countrey by the Priests, was constrained to leaue that countrey and to seke an other place: and so comming to M. Welche, he desired him of hys good will that hee myght depart from him, saying on this wise to him: Syr I

perceiue I shall not be suffered to tary long heere in this countrey, neither shall you be able though you woulde, to keepe me out of the hands of the spiritualitie, and also what displeasure might grow therby to you by keeping me, God knoweth: for the which I should be right sorie. So that in fine, M. Tindall with the good will of his maister, departed, and eftsoones came up to London."

His reason for choosing London is quite in accordance with the curious simplicity of nature which this remarkable man united with the most inflexible firmness in defence of the truth as he saw it. It was, in short, to seek a post in the establishment of Cuthbert Tunstall, Bishop of London, and under such auspices to carry through his task of translating the Bible! The humorous side of such an idea evidently did not strike him in the very least at the time, though he came shortly to see how unreasonable his hope had been; nor, one imagines, would the Bishop have seen the humour of the proposition, had he fully understood the end which this country teacher had in view in seeking a place in his household. It will be best to let Tyndale tell the tale in his own words, as he does, with considerable vigour, in his Preface to the translation of Genesis in his version of the Pentateuch, published in 1530.

"And even in the bisshope of londons house," he says, "I entended to have done it. For when I was so turmoyled in the contre where I was that I coude no lenger dwell there (the processe wherof were to longe here to re-herce) I this wyse thought in my silfe, this I suffre because the prestes of the contre be unlerned, as god it knoweth there are a full ignorant sorte which haue sene no more latyn then that they read in their portesses (breviaries) and missales which yet many of them can scarcely read. . . . As I this thought, the bishope of London came to my remembrance whome Erasmus (whose tonge maketh of litle gnattes greate elephantes and lifteth vpp above the starres whosoever geveth him a litle exhibition) prayseth excedingly amonge other in his annotatyons on the new testament for his great learninge.

Then thought I, if I might come to this mannes service, I were happye. And so I gate me to london, and thorow the accoyntaunce of my master came to sir harry gilford, the kinges graces countroller, and brought him an oration of Isocrates which I had translated out of Greke in to English, and desyred him to speake vnto my lorde of london for me, which he also did as he shewed me, and willed me to write a pistle to my lorde, and to goo to him my silf which I also did, and delivered my pistle to a servant of his awne, one Wyllyam hebilthwayte, a man of myne old accoyntaunce. But god which knoweth what is within hypocrites, sawe that I was begyled, and that that councell was not the nexte way vnto my purpose. And therfore he gate me no favoure in my lordes sight.

Wherevppon my lorde answered me, his house was full, he had mo then he coude well finde (more than he could well support) and advised me to seke in london, wher he sayd I coude not lacke a service. And so in london I abode almost an yere, and marked the course of the worlde." . . .

Bishop Tunstall, to whom Tyndale made his application with such simplicity, was destined to have a curious history in respect of his relationship to the English Bible. He was one of the most vigorous opponents of a vernacular Bible, and his attempt to destroy Tyndale's translation by buying up the whole edition and burning it was the means, as we shall see, of furnishing the translator with funds to continue his work. When times changed, and Henry VIII had broken with the Pope, the worthy bishop changed with them, and as Bishop of Durham authorised the issue of the Great Bible. Now the Great Bible may be best described as a compilation from Matthew's and Coverdale's Bibles, or a revision of Matthew's Bible by Coverdale. Matthew's Bible is almost entirely simply Tyndale's version; and so when the fourth edition of the Great Bible appeared in 1540–41, it bore on its title-page "the strange device"—"Oversene and perused at the commaundement of the kynges hyghnes, by the ryghte reverende fathers in God Cuthbert bysshop of Duresme (Durham) and Nicholas bisshop of Rochester."

It would have completed the circle of variation had the original translation been made, according to Tyndale's simple hope, under the roof of the same Cuthbert when he sat on the episcopal throne of London. One wonders what were Bishop Tunstall's feelings as he oversaw and perused the book which he had so diligently banned and burned in his earlier avatar; if indeed his perusing was anything more than nominal. There is no need, of course, to call the good bishop a hypocrite, though Tyndale, who, like most controversialists of that virile time, had an unfortunate habit of adding adjectives to the common name for a spade, did so roundly. "The ryghte reverende father in God, Cuthbert, Bysshop of Duresme," was merely one of the large family of the Vicar of Bray, and saw things quite differently when he put on the spectacles of "the king's commandment," especially when the king was so strong-willed a monarch as Henry VIII; and the Bible which was a work of the Devil when Tyndale translated it on his own responsibility, was a work of God when Coverdale, by royal command, revised Matthew's adaptation of Tyndale's version. There were other men, on both sides of the controversy, who were no more consistent than Tunstall, and for much the same reason.

Meanwhile, however, Tyndale has been waiting in London, "marking the course of the world" to such purpose that, as he tells us, he "vnderstode at the laste not only that there was no rowme in my lorde of londons palace to translate the new testament, but also that there was no place to do it in all englonde." During part, at least, of his stay in London, he was maintained by a good merchant of the city, Humphrey Monmouth, whose name deserves to be remembered by all who love their Bibles. Monmouth got into trouble for his kindness to Tyndale, and was duly charged before Bishop Stokesley of London "for hauing and reading heretical bookes and treatises, for geuing exhibition (maintenance) to William Tindall, Roy, and such other, for helping them ouer the sea to Luther, for ministring priuie helpe to translate, as well the

Testament, as other bookes into English, for eating flesh in Lent . . . etc."

His statement gives so good a picture of the translator that the part of it referring to Tyndale is worth quoting. "But (Tyndale) being refused of the Bishop, so came agayne to the sayd Mummuth this examinate, and besought him to helpe hym. Who the same tyme tooke hym into hys house for halfe a yeare, where the said Tindall liued (as he sayd) like a good priest, studieng both night and day. He would eat but sodden meate, by his good will, nor drink but small single beere. He was neuer seene in that house to weare lynnen about him all the space of his beyng there. Whereupon the sayd Mummuth had the better liking of hym, so that he promised him ten pound (as he then sayd) for his father and mothers soules, and all Christen soules, which money afterwards he sent him ouer to Hamborow, according to his promise."

Humphrey Monmouth's reason for having a "better liking" for Tyndale may seem not much more satisfactory than Johnson's reason for approving of Christopher Smart—"He did not love clean linen; and I have no passion for it;" but he had other reasons for esteeming him besides the old idea that dirt and godliness went together, and his help enabled the translator to proceed with the work which lay so near to his heart. From May 1524, Tyndale was in Hamburg, apparently engaged upon the work of translation. He remained there until the spring of 1525, when he betook himself to Cologne, where he arranged for the secret printing of his New Testament at the press of Peter Quentel. The work had got as far as the printing off of three thousand copies of the first ten sheets (sigs. A–K), when the secret became known in no very honourable way. A man called Johann Dobneck, better known, according to the Latinising jargon of the time, as Cochlaeus, was living at Cologne, "engaged in literary labours," which he varied with a little spying on his own account. "By all this business," says this honourable gentleman in his own narrative, "Dobneck

had become pretty intimate and familiar with the Cologne printers, when one day he heard them boasting confidently over their wine that whether the King and Cardinal of England liked it or no, England would soon be Lutheran. He heard also that there were there in hiding two Englishmen, learned, skilled in languages and ready of speech, whom, however, he could never see nor speak to. Dobneck therefore asked certain printers to his inn, and after he had warmed them with wine, one of them in confidential talk revealed to him the secret by which England was to be brought over to the side of Luther—namely that there were in the press three thousand copies of the Lutheran New Testament translated into English, and that in the order of the quires they had got as far as the letter K; funds were being freely supplied by English merchants who meant secretly to import the work when printed and disperse it surreptitiously through all England before King or Cardinal could discover or forbid it.

Alarmed and bewildered as he was, Dobneck disguised his grief under an appearance of admiration; but the next day, weighing the greatness of the danger, he began to think by what means he could conveniently thwart the wicked project. He therefore went secretly to Hermann Rinck, a patrician of Cologne, and military knight, intimate with the Emperor and the King of England and of their counsel, and to him disclosed the whole business as, thanks to the wine, he had heard it. . . . The two English heretics, hastily taking with them the printed quires, made their escape by boat up the Rhine to Worms, where the people were all mad on Luther, in order that there by another printer they might complete the work. Rinck and Dobneck, on their part, presently advised the King, Cardinal, and Bishop of Rochester of the affair by letters, so that they might take diligent precautions at all the English ports to prevent these pernicious wares being imported."

By such highly honourable means, thoroughly in accordance with the other dealings of the Roman Church with Tyndale, the work was thus delayed for a little. Only for a

little, however. It is not certain what became of the interrupted quarto edition: but the probability is that it was completed, and that three thousand copies were printed at Worms in 1525 by Peter Schoeffer. Meanwhile Tyndale decided to print an octavo edition as well, and this was actually finished before the completion of the quarto edition. Of these two earliest printed English New Testaments, there only survive at the present time three fragments. The interrupted quarto is represented by what is known as "The Grenville Fragment," which was only discovered in 1834, and which contains only the prologue and the Gospel of St. Matthew as far as the twenty-second chapter. It is now in the British Museum, and stops short just two sheets before the point at which Dobneck's kind attentions interrupted the work at Cologne. The words with which it ends at the end of sheet H, are "Friend, how camest thou in hither, and . . ." Two copies of Peter Schoeffer's octavo edition of Worms survive, in more or less dilapidated condition. Of these the most complete is in the library of the Baptist College at Bristol, all that is lacking to it being the title-page and the prologue, a matter of eight leaves. The other copy, which is in St. Paul's Cathedral Library, is less perfect, as it lacks some 78 leaves. The fact that out of six thousand copies, counting both the quarto and octavo editions, only three imperfect specimens survive, is evidence of the thoroughness with which the work of searching out and destroying the hated volume was carried out.

To the octavo edition, Tyndale added an Epilogue addressed "To the Reder," in which he describes some of the disadvantages under which he had laboured in the production of his translation, and pledges himself to the completion and perfecting of his great work. "Them that are learned Christenly I beseche . . . that the rudnes off the work nowe at the fiyrst tyme, offende them not: but that they consyder howe that I had no man to counterfet (to imitate), nether was holpe with englysshe of eny that had interpreted the same, or soche lyke thinge in the

scripture before tyme. Moreover even very necessitie and combraunce (God is recorde) above ſtrengthe, which I will not rehearce, leſt we shulde seme to boſt ourselues, caused that many thynges are lackinge, which necessaryly are requyred. Count it as a thynge not havynge his full shape, but as it were borne afore hys tyme, even as a thynge begunne rather then fynesshed. In tyme to come (yf god have apoynted vs there vnto) we will geve it his full shape: and putt out yf ought be added superfluusly: and adde to yff ought be oversene thorowe negligence: and will enfoarce to brynge to compendeousnes, that which is nowe translated at the lengthe, and to geve lyght where it is requyred, and to seke in certayne places more proper englysshe, and with a table to expounde the wordes which are nott commonly vsed, and shewe howe the scripture vseth many wordes, which are wother wyse vnderſtode of the commen peoplè, and to helpe with a declaracion where one tonge taketh nott another. And will endever ourselves, as it were to sethe it better, and to make it more apte for the weake ſtomakes: desyrynge them that are learned, and able, to remember their duetie, and to helpe therevnto: and to beſtowe vnto the edyfyinge of Chriſtis body (which is the congregacion of them that beleve) those gyftes which they have receaved of god for the same purpose. The grace that commeth of Chriſt be with them that love hym, praye for vs."

The promise which he thus modeſtly makes, Tyndale was to make good nobly in the few years that ſtill remained to him. Meanwhile, his New Teſtament, in its two forms, with all its imperfections, was on its way to England, concealed in bales of merchandise, to protect it from the vigilance of the Royal and Episcopal officers, who, warned by the diligent Dobneck and more reputable spies, such as Edward Lee, afterwards Archbishop of York, were eagerly on the look-out to prevent the poison of the Gospels from reaching the faithful, who were so much more amenable to ecclesiaſtical domination when kept in ignorance. The firſt blow in the ſtruggle for a People's Bible had been ſtruck.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

The Struggle for a People's Bible. ii. The Burning of the Books

MEANWHILE in England the champions of the sacredness of ignorance were greatly perturbed. Dobneck's warning, in spite of the unsavoury way in which his information had been obtained, was in itself sufficient to flutter the episcopal dovecotes; but it was supported by a letter written direct to King Henry by a man of much greater importance and higher character, whose words may be quoted, not only as showing the dread with which such translations as that of Tyndale were viewed by the clergy, but also as demonstrating what has often been denied, the habitual attitude of the then English hierarchy towards all vernacular Bibles.

"Please it your highnesse morover to vnderstonde," writes the Edward Lee mentioned in the last chapter, who was then King's Almoner, "that I ame certainlie enformed as I passed in this contree, that an englishman your subject at the sollicitacion and instaunce of Luther, with whome he is, hathe translated the newe testament in to Englishe, and within four dayes entendethe to arrive with the same emprinted in England. I nede not to aduertise your grace, what infection and daunger maye ensue heerbie, if it bee not withstonded. This is the next waye to fulfill your realme with lutherians, for all Luthers peruerse opinions bee grownded vpon bare wordes of scriptur not well taken ne vnderstanded, wiche your grace hathe opened in sondrie places of your royall booke. *All our forfaders, gouenors of the chirche of England hathe with all diligence forbed and exchued publicacion of englishe bibles, as apereth in constitutions prouincall*

of the chirche of Englond. Nowe sire as god hath endued your grace with Christian couraige to sett forthe the standard against thees Philistees, and to vanquish them, so I doubt not that he will assist your grace to prosecute and performe the same, that is to vndertreade them that they shall not nowe againe lift vppe their hedds, wiche they endevor nowe by means of englyshe bibles. . . . Blessed be god, your noble realme is yet onblotted. Wherfor lest anye daunger myght ensue, if these bookes secretlie shold bee browght in, I thowght my duetie to advertise your grace therof, considering that it toochethe your highe honor, & the wealthe & integrite of the christen fayth within your realme wiche cannot long endure, if thees bookes may come in. . . ."

As a kind of warning of the treatment which such work as that of Tyndale might expect in England, Cardinal Wolsey, on February 11, 1526, gave a great demonstration of the true way to dispose of heretical literature, coupled with a hint as to what heretics themselves might expect if they persisted in their wrongdoing. Early on that Shrove Sunday morning, a great procession set out to march through London from the Fleet prison to St. Paul's. It was led by the warden of the Fleet, with the knight marshal, the tipstaves, and "all the company they could make, with bills and glaives." In the midst of this martial train marched six men dressed in penitential garb, one carrying a lighted candle of five pounds weight, the other five bearing a faggot apiece, to remind them and others of the due and righteous fate of heresy—a fate which in this case was to be remitted for a season. They arrived at St. Paul's at eight o'clock—somewhat early, on a chilly February morning, for a great public treat; but arrangements had been made for taking the chill off the proceedings. The old Gothic Cathedral was crowded. A platform had been erected in the middle of the nave, and here sate Cardinal Wolsey " in his whole pomp . . . even like a bloody Antichrist," to quote the vigorous language of the time, supported by eighteen bishops, and mitred abbots, and priors who made up the number of great ecclesiastical

dignitaries to thirty-six, lesser luminaries sitting around on a lower level, " in gowns of damask and satin."

Over the door of the north transept, opposite the platform, there stood a great crucifix, which went by the name of the Rood of Northen ; and at the foot of it, inside a rail, burnt a fire, beside which a great number of heretical books, including such of Tyndale's Testaments as the authorities had been able to lay hands on in Antwerp or elsewhere, before importation began, were piled in baskets. In front of the cardinal's throne, on another platform, where they could be seen and heard of all the vast crowd, were the six penitents, five of them members of the Steel-yard, that great Anglo-German trading company, of one of whose merchants, George Gisze, Holbein has left us a splendid portrait, to show us how picturesque a great trader of the sixteenth century could look. The sixth was Dr. Barnes of the Austin Friars at Cambridge, whom Cardinal Wolsey doubtless regarded with a sardonic smile, for while he was a noted and somewhat noisy " Lutherian," it is possible that the head and front of his offence in the sermon for which he was now doing penance was his mockery of the swagger and splendour of the great Cardinal.

The penitents made confession on their knees, with their faggots on their shoulders. The Bishop of Rochester preached a sermon, and when the sermon was done, Dr. Barnes made public confession that " he was more charitably handled than he deserved, his heresies were so heinous and detestable." Thereafter the penitents were led by the knight-marshal three times around the fire beneath the crucifix, and each cast in his faggot. The baskets of heretical books and Testaments were then emptied on the flames. While they were blazing, the penitents were absolved by Bishop Fisher, and this extraordinary performance came to a close. " The Cardinal departed under a canopy with all his mitred men till he came to the second gate of Paul's, and then he took his mule."

" Dame Partington," said Sydney Smith, " was seen at the

door of her house with mop and pattens, trundling her mop, squeezing out the sea-water, and vigorously pushing away the Atlantic Ocean. The Atlantic was roused. Mrs. Partington's spirit was up ; but I need not tell you that the contest was unequal—The Atlantic Ocean beat Mrs. Partington." The great Cardinal fared no better than the immortal Dame Partington in his ludicrous attempt to drive back the great tide of truth which was now rolling in upon England. He knew his fellow-countrymen but ill if he imagined that such a piece of play-acting was likely to awe them or daunt their spirits. " No burnt offering," wrote Cardinal Campeggio to Wolsey, after he heard of the foolery at St. Paul's, " could be better pleasing to God." The only comment that seems appropriate is that some people must have a curious idea of God !

It seems probable that the greater portion of Tyndale's two editions of 1525 escaped the Shrove Sunday holocaust at St. Paul's, and that the copies which were burned there were only such as the emissaries of the Cardinal had succeeded in procuring at Antwerp and elsewhere. Ere long the dreaded volumes were rapidly coming into the country, under all sorts of disguises, and being distributed by means of an organisation which was both secret and efficient. It was manifest that something must be done to prevent the corruption of the whole realm by the dangerous poison of the Gospel. Accordingly Bishop Tunstall fiercely attacked the translation in a sermon delivered at Paul's Cross, professing to have found three thousand errors in it. Such wholesale condemnation, however, overshot its mark. Nobody really believed the bishop, in spite of the certificate which Erasmus had given to his scholarship, and the general impression which his ravings made upon his hearers may be judged from the verdict of one of his audience. " Truly my heart lamented greatly to hear a great man preaching against the New Testament, who showed forth certain things that he noted for hideous errors to be in it, that I, yea, and not only I, but likewise did many other, think verily to be none."

More formidable, because of the character for liberality and broad-mindedness attaching to its author, was the bitter attack of Sir Thomas More; and Tyndale showed that he realised the importance of it by replying with considerable vigour to the criticism. The prolegomena to Sir Thomas's assault sound indeed very formidable. "But now I pray you," says his interlocutor, "let me kno your mynd concernyng the burning of the new testament in English, which Tindal lately translated, & (as men say) right well, whiche makethe men mich meruayl of the burning.

It is, quod I, to me gret meruayl, that eny good cristen man hauing eny drop of wyt in hys hed, wold eny thing meruell or complayn of the burning of that boke if he knowe the mater which who so callith the new testament calleth it by a wrong name, except they wyl call yt Tyndals testament or Luthers testament. For so had tyndall after Luthers counsayle corrupted and chaunged yt from the good and holsom doctryne of Criste to the deuylysh heresyes of theyr own, that it was clene a contrary thing.

That were maruayle quod your frend that it shold be so clene contrary. For to som that red it semed very lyke.

It ys quod I neuer the lesse contrary, and yet the more peryllous. For like as to a trew siluer grote a fals coper grote is neuer the lesse contrary thogh yt be quyk siluered ouer, but so mych the more false in how mich it is counterfeted the more lyke to the trouth, so was the translacion so mich the more contrary in how mich it was to folke vnlernyd more hard to be dyssernid.

Why quod your frend what fautes wer ther in yt?

To tell you all that quod I were in a maner to reherse you all the hole boke, wherin ther were founden and noted wrong & falsly translated a boue a thousand textes by tale.

I wolde quod he fayn here some one.

He that shuld quod I study for that, shuld study where to finde water in the see." After all this ominous rumbling of the mountain in labour, Sir Thomas's efforts only produce at last a most ridiculous mouse in the shape of an accusation

that Tyndale had mistranslated three words of "gret weyght," "and euery one of them is as I suppose more than thryes three tymes repeted and rehersed in the boke"—the terrible three being "priest," "church," and "charity."

The learned and witty Lord Chancellor of England no doubt imagined that he was going forth to an easy victory when he struck Tyndale's shield with his sharpened lance; but he was to learn before he died that the "rude, dull, and slow-witted" antagonist whom he had provoked was far more than his match. More found that the attempt to confute Tyndale was henceforth to be the chief labour of his busy life; and the controversy with the obscure student occupies more than a thousand folio pages in the collected edition of the Chancellor's works. The result of the battle is summed up thus by Demaus: "A 'Confutation' ten times the size of the book which it was intended to demolish was *ipso facto* a failure. Such, as More himself confesses, was the general verdict of contemporary readers."

One point in the controversy must be noted, even at the cost of a digression. The stock charge brought against Tyndale, as against other Reformers, is that by the violence and indecency of the language which they used in controversy and in their glosses and comments on the Scriptures, they put themselves beyond the pale, and justified the action of their opponents in burning the translations in which these comments appeared. Nobody, at this time of day, would seek to justify the strength of the language which is sometimes used by Tyndale and others; but the criticism of it comes ill from the lips of those whose most cultured and learned champion used towards Tyndale such filthy Billingsgate as abounds in More's "Confutation." There we learn that Tyndale is "a beast discharging a filthy foam of blasphemies out of his brutish beastly mouth," that he learned his heresies "from his own father the devil that is in hell," and that he is one of the "hellhounds that the devil hath in his kennel."

Tyndale on one occasion spoke of the writings of Thomas

Aquinas as "draff"—a judgment which need not have been so crudely expressed, but in which he would have many supporters at the present day. His contemptuous comment, however, sounds politeness itself compared with the criticism which was poured out upon it by the foremost man of England. "This glorious saint of God . . . doth this devilish drunken soul abominably blaspheme, and calleth them liars and falsifiers of Scripture, and maketh them no better than draff. But this drowsy drudge hath drunken so deep in the devil's dregs, that but if he awake and repent himself the sooner, he may hap ere aught long to fall into the mashing-fat, and turn himself into draff as which the hogs of hell shall feed upon and fill their bellies thereof." Doubtless two blacks do not make a white, and it is no pleasure to point out the self-degradation of so great a man as More; but mere decency should surely require silence on the subject of the violent language of the Reformers after this exhibition of the gentle courtesy with which the great champion of Romanism turned the other cheek to the smiter.

It will be noticed that More in his Dialogue distinctly charges Tyndale with being simply a reproducer of Luther, so that the New Testament which he produced ought to be called Luther's Testament. This, of course, was the "common form" of the opponents of a vernacular English Bible at the time; more or less it has continued to be the common form of Romanist criticism to the present day, along with another myth—that Tyndale was no scholar, and that all his work of translation was simply a version of other men's work. Both these ideas, of course, are absolutely devoid of truth. The actual fact is that Tyndale was one of the most competent and versatile scholars of his time, and that while it is evident that he had Luther's translation under his eyes and used its help frequently in his own work, as every scholar who knew his business would do in such a case, he invariably translates as an independent and competent scholar would do, and his rendering is as completely his own as Luther's rendering is his.

OLD ST. PAUL'S

Most splendid and famous of English Pre-Reformation Cathedrals, the scene of the burning of the Bibles. Itself burned in the Great Fire of 1666.

Hermann Buschius, who met Tyndale at Worms in 1526, subsequently stated to Spalatin that the Englishman who translated the New Testament was "so skilled in seven languages, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Italian, Spanish, English, French, that whichever he spoke you would suppose it his native tongue." Such a testimony should set at rest all questions as to Tyndale's competency as a translator; to how many scholars of the present day, one wonders, could such a certificate be given? The best answer to those who question Tyndale's competency is to be found in the fact that our New Testament of to-day, after so many versions and revisions, remains substantially Tyndale's New Testament. "The English Bible," writes Demaus, "has been subjected to repeated revisions; the scholarship of generations, better provided than Tyndale was with critical apparatus, has been brought to bear upon it; writers, by no means over-friendly to the original translator, have had it in their power to disparage and displace his work; yet in spite of all these influences, that Book to which all Englishmen turn as the source, and the guide, and the stay of their spiritual life, is still substantially the translation of Tyndale." On a fact so remarkable, criticism simply breaks itself.

The great Shrove Sunday demonstration proved as futile as might have been expected in arresting the incoming tide of Testaments. Accordingly a meeting of bishops was held, under Cardinal Wolsey's presidency, in autumn 1526, to consider what steps should be taken in the matter. William Roye, whose satire gives us information about the conference, tells us that Wolsey was indisposed to take any further action, but that he was overborne by the zeal of Tunstall. The Cardinal, says Roye,

> "Spake the words of Pilat,
> Sayinge, 'I fynde no fault therin.'
> . . . . .
> Then answered Bishop Cayphas (Tunstall)
> That a grett part better it was
> The Gospell to be condemned;

Leſt their vices manyfolde
Shulde be knowen of yonge and olde,
Their eſtate to be contempned.
The Cardinall then incontinent
Againſt the Gospell gave judgement,
Sayinge to brenne he deserved.
Wherto all the bisshoppis cryed,
Answerynge, 'It cannot be denyed
He is worthy so to be served.'"

There followed upon this decision Tunſtall's famous sermon at Paul's Cross, with his assertion of Tyndale's (or rather the unknown translator's) inaccuracy.

"He declared there in his furiousness," says Roye,
"That he fownde erroures more and les
Above thre thousande in the translacion.
Howe be it, when all came to pass,
I dare saye vnable he was
Of one erroure to make probacion."

By 1530, six editions, three of them surreptitious, had been dispersed. "So far from England being then a 'Bible-thirſty land,'" says Mr. J. R. Dore (*Old Bibles*), "there was no anxiety whatever for an English version at that time, excepting among a small minority of the people . . . there was no general demand for Bibles from the millions of people living in Great Britain." Presumably, therefore, the writer of this fatuous pronouncement believes that the printers who pirated Tyndale's version and put it into circulation were misunderſtood benefactors of their kind, caſting their bread upon the waters out of pure zeal, and with no hope of pecuniary return. It may have been so; if it was, they were unusual printers!

The rapid increase of the evil necessitated desperate measures, and all the more so because the diligent efforts of John Hackett, Wolsey's confidential agent in the Low Countries, to check the ſtream at its source, had almoſt entirely failed owing to the spirit of independence shown by the Antwerp authorities. Accordingly a brilliant scheme was devised, of which Tunſtall for long got the credit, but

in which, as is now apparent, he was only acting for his ecclesiastical superior, Archbishop Warham. This was to buy up on the Continent all the copies of the deadly book, so that the whole stock might be burned, and a total end made of the contagion. The history of how this magnificent piece of strategy was carried out, and what were its results, is told by Hall in his *Chronicle*. Perhaps he is not implicitly to be trusted in all his details, and, as we have seen, he is wrong in attributing the original design to the Bishop of London; but his story is so vivid and quaint, and the whole business was such a gigantic farce, that he is worth quoting.

"Here is to be remembred," he says, "that at this present tyme, Willyam Tyndale had newly translated and imprinted the Newe Testament in Englishe, and the Bishop of London, not pleased with the translacion thereof, debated with hymself, how he might compass and deuise, to destroy that false and erronious translacion (as he saied). And so it happened that one Augustine Packyngton, a Mercer and Merchant of London, and of a great honestie, the same tyme was in Andwarp, where the Bishope then was, and this Packyngton was a man that highly fauored William Tindale, but to the bishop shewed hymself vtterly to the contrary. The bishop desirous to haue his purpose brought to passe, commoned of the New Testamentes, and how gladly he would bye them. Packyngton then hearyng that he wished for, saied vnto the bishop, my Lorde, if it bee your pleasure I can in this matter dooe more I dare saie, then moste of the Merchauntes of Englande that are here, for I knowe the Dutchemen and straungiers, that have bought theim of Tyndale, and haue theim here to sell, so that if it be your lordshippes pleasure, to paye for theim, for otherwise I cannot come by them, but I must disburse money for theim, I will then assure you to haue euery boke of them, that is imprinted and is here vnsolde. The Bishop, thinkyng that he had God by the too (toe), when in deede he had (as after he thought) the Deuell by the fiste, saied, gentle Master Packyngton, do your diligence and get them and with all

my harte I will paie for them, whatsoeuer thei coſt you, for the bokes are erronious and naughtes and I entende surely to deſtroy theim all, and to burne theim at Paules Cross.

Aguſtine Packyngton came to Willyam Tyndale and saied, Willyam I knowe thou art a poore man, and haſt a hepe of newe Teſtamentes, and bokes by thee, for the which thou haſt bothe indaungered thy frendes, and beggered thyself, and I haue now gotten thee a Merchaunt, whiche with ready money shall dispatche thee of all that thou haſt, if you thynke it so proffitable for your self. Who is the Merchant said Tyndale? The bishoppe of London, saied Packyngton, O that is because he will burne them saied Tyndale. Ye, Mary quod Packyngton, I am the gladder said Tyndale for these two benefites shall come therof, I shall get money of hym for these bokes, to bryng myself out of debt (and the whole world shall crie out vpon the burnynge of Goddes worde). And the ouerplus of the money, that shall remain to me, shall make me more ſtudious, to correct the said Newe Teſtament, and so newly to Imprint the same once again, and I truſt the second will muche better like you, then euer did the firſt: And so forward went the bargain, the bishop had the bokes, Packyngton had the thankes, and Tyndale had the money.

Afterward when mo newe Teſtamentes were Imprinted, thei came thicke and threfolde into Englande, the bishop of London hearyng that ſtill there were so many Newe Teſtamentes abrode, sent for Auguſtyne Packyngton and saide vnto him: Sir how commeth this, that ther are so many Newe Teſtamentes abrode, and you promised and assured me that you had bought al? then saied Packyngton, I promes you I bought all that then was to bee had: but I perceiue thei haue made more sence, and it will neuer bee better, as long as thei haue the letters and ſtampes, therefore it were beſt for your lordshippe to bye the ſtampes to, and then are you sure: the bishop smiled at hym (small wonder) and saied, well, Packyngton, well, and so ended this matter.

Shortly after it fortuned one George Conſtantine, to be

apprehended by Sir Thomas More, whiche was then lorde Chauncellor of England of suspicion of certain heresies. And this Constantine beyng with More, after diuerse examinacions of diuerse thynges, emong other, Master More saied in this wise to Constantine. Constantine I would haue thee plain with me in one thyng that I will aske of thee, and I promes thee I will shewe thee fauor in all the other thynges, wherof thou art accused to me. There is beyond the sea Tyndale, Ioye, and a great many mo of you. I know thei cannot liue without helpe, some sendeth theim money and succoureth theim, and thy self beyng one of them, haddst parte therof, & therefore knowest from whence it came. I praie thee who be thei that thus helpe theim? My lorde, quod Constantine, will you that I shal tell you the truthe? Yea, I praie the, quod my Lorde. Mary I will, quod Constantine, truly quod he it is the Bishoppe of London that hath holpen vs, for he hath bestowed emong vs a greate deale of money in Newe Testamentes to burne theim, and that hath and yet is our onely succoure and comforte. Now by my trothe quod More, I thynke euen the same, and I said so muche to the bishop, when he went about to bye them."

Such was the sad fate of the great scheme for the suppression of Tyndale's poisonous book. It may be doubted if it all happened just quite so pat as Hall makes out, and in particular, one scarcely sees the whole colony of English exiles living on the £62 9s. 4d. which we know to have been the sum which Archbishop Warham expended, even though this would amount to about £700 in modern currency; but the sublime muddle-headedness of the whole transaction makes it the most humorous incident in a time which had enough of tragedy, and one is grateful for it accordingly. On the whole the fact that it never seemed to enter the heads of two presumably clever Churchmen like Warham and Tunstall that Tyndale would do with the money what it was perfectly obvious that he must do, unless he was to be as great a fool as themselves, is the most doubtful compliment

which could be paid to the intelligence of the Church leaders of the time. More, to be sure, was not at his best in dealing with heretics; but even More could see what the Archbishop and his Bishop were blind to. Almost as humorous as the "Through the Looking-Glass" aspect of the affair is the indignation with which some people, to whom the fact that anything was done by a Reformer is sufficient warrant for condemning it, regard the fact that Tyndale should have been willing to take the money of the Bishop of London, who was going to burn his work, in order that he might be provided with funds to do the work better. "As he sold the books to Augustine Packington," says Mr. Dore, who can see no good in Tyndale whatsoever, "well knowing the purpose for which they were being purchased, he was a participator in the crime, and as much to be blamed as the Bishop of London." The descendants of the White Knight are evidently not yet extinct in our land.

With the exception of the quarto edition published at or near the same time as the octavo edition of 1525, it must be remembered that all the editions of which we have been speaking, and which the Bishop of London was busily burning, were without note or comment, and simply reproduced the text of the New Testament in English, giving marginal references to parallel passages. This fact, of course, is absolutely fatal to the contention of those who maintain that the reason why these translations were burnt was that they contained notes which were either offensive or heretical. "This," says Mr. Demaus, "is a total delusion, a defence of ancient bigotry by modern ignorance. It must not be forgotten, that what was prohibited, what was condemned, what was burnt, was the simple text of Holy Scripture without any note, or comment, or prologue of any kind whatsoever. The Bible-burners of the sixteenth century would have repudiated with indignation the motives which *candid* moderns have been kind enough to invent for them. In their judgment the whole question was entirely free from these complications which modern refinement

has introduced; and they pronounce their opinion with a plainness which at once supersedes all doubt.

'The New Testament translated into the vulgar tongue,' says one of the chief opponents of the Reformers, 'is in truth the food of death, the fuel of sin, the vail of malice, the pretext of false liberty, the protection of disobedience, the corruption of discipline, the depravity of morals, the termination of concord, the death of honesty, the well-spring of vices, the disease of virtues, the instigation of rebellion, the milk of pride, the nourishment of contempt, the death of peace, the destruction of charity, the enemy of unity, the murderer of truth!' That men who cherished such sentiments as these, should proscribe and burn the Bible in the native tongue, was as natural as that men who dread contagion should burn all infected garments."

The gentleman who raked together such an amazing heap of damnatory epithets to describe the Word of God was no other than our friend Johann Dobneck or Cochlaeus. After reading his effusion, one ceases to wonder that he considered it a deed well-pleasing to God to make a few compositors drunk that he might worm their secrets out of them. He was only acting after his kind, and one's wonder must be reserved solely for the astonishing fertility in cursing, which enables him to carry on for so long, and only to repeat himself (more or less) once or twice!

So far as can be judged, the number of New Testaments which could be purchased by the operations of Archbishop Warham and Bishop Tunstall in their effort to make a corner in Bibles can only have been about a sixth even of the quarto and octavo editions of Worms, to say nothing of the pirated Antwerp editions. "Large as this sum was," says Mr. Pollard, referring to Archbishop Warham's expenditure of £62 9s. 4d., "about £700 of modern value, if the average retail price of a New Testament was six groats (five for the 8vo and seven for the 4to), or 2s., the number purchased would only be about 663, and even if 50 per cent be added to this to represent the allowance made to a wholesale buyer, it

would amount to about one thousand, or one-sixth of the total number printed." From such a calculation, one can see how preposterous was the attempt of the hierarchy to keep out the poison of the Word of God by buying up the copies of it—even though the Archbishop may, in the end, have expended much more than the sum of which we have documentary evidence. In fact, the more he spent on destroying Bibles, the more he ensured their multiplication.

The Archbishop, however, had no intention of bearing the charges of his wily plan himself. There is extant a letter from Richard Nix, Bishop of Norwich, to Warham, from which we learn that the cost was to be borne by all the bishops of the Province of Canterbury, by a kind of voluntary assessment. " In right humble maner," writes the worthy Bishop, " I commende me vnto your goode Lordeshippe, Doynge the same tundrestand, that I latly receyued your letters dated at your manor of Lambethe, the xxvj daie of the moneth of Maij, by the whiche I do perceyue that youre grace hath lately goten into your handes all the bokes of the newe testamente translated into Englesshe and pryented beyonde the see aswele those with the gloses ioyned vnto theym *as thoder without the gloses*, by meanes of exchaunge by you made therfore to the somme of lxij*l.* ix*s.* iiij*d.* Surely in myne opynion you have done therin a graciouse and a blessed dede, and god I doubt not, shal highly rewarde you therfore."

The Bishop then mentions Warham's request for a contribution towards the fund for the campaign against the Bible, and adds—" Pleaseth you tundrestande that I am right wele contented to geue and avance in this behalue ten markes, and shall cause the same to be delyuered vnto the said maister Potkyn shortely the which somme I think sufficient for my parte if euery Busshopp within your said provynce make like contribution and avauncemente after the Rate and substance of their benefices. Neuer the lesse if your grace thinke this somme of ten markes not sufficient for my parte in this mater, (the nombre and substance of thoder your suffragans considered) your furdre pleasure knowen I shallbe as gladde to

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HOLBEIN'S DRAWING OF ARCHBISHOP WARHAM

A wonderful character study—with its haggard eyes—of a good man whose burden was heavier than he could bear.

conforme my self therunto in this or any other mater concernynge the churche, as any your subgiet within your provynce. As knowes Almyghty god, who longe preserue you to his moſte pleasure and your hertes desire. At hoxne in Suff. the xiiij daie of Junii 1527.

Your humble obediencur and baidman (bedesman),

R. Norvich."

Bishop Nix's contribution would amount to about £6 13s. 4d., or about a tenth of the Archbishop's outlay, so that, though he was obviously not in the leaſt anxious to pay any more than he could help towards this "graciouse and blessed dede," he was actually bearing a fair share.

It is Richard Norvich also who, three years later, tells us in a letter to the King how far agley this well-laid scheme of the Bishops had gone. Here is the bitter cry of the good man, who imagined that he had forever laid the ghoſt of an English Bible by the timely inveſtment of his "ten markes," and finds, to his disguſt, that the more you afflict the truth, the more it multiplies and grows. "After moſte humbill recomendation, I do your grace tvndreſtande that I am accombered with suche as kepith and redethe these Arronious bokes in engleshe and belev and gif credence to the same and teacheth other that they shuld so doo, My Lorde I have done that lieth in me for the suppression of suche parsons, but it passith my power, or any spirituall manne for to do it." . . .

Indeed poor Bishop Nix, trembling with indignation as he indited his woeful epiſtle to his king, was to find that it did pass, not only his power, but that of poor Archbishop Warham looking from Lambeth with haggard eyes, as we see him in Holbein's drawing, into a future big with doom, and even the power of the whole order of things for which they ſtood, to suppress the truth which Tyndale had let loose in England.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

The Struggle for a People's Bible. iii. A Martyr's Victory

WHILE the burning of the New Testament was proceeding in England Tyndale was hard at work with the translation of the Old Testament, and in addition was publishing several controversial works such as the *Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen* (1528), the *Treatise on the Obedience of a Christian Man* (1528) and the *Practice of Prelates* (1530). At this time he appears to have been residing at Marburg, in Hesse-Cassel, the scene of the famous Sacramentarian conference between Luther and Zwingli; and it was at Marburg that the publication of his next translation of Scripture took place. This second of Tyndale's great contributions to the creation of an English Bible, was his version of the Pentateuch, and it bore the colophon, "Emprented at Malborow, in the land of Hesse, by me, Hans Luft, the yere of oure Lorde M.CCCCC.XXX, the xvii dayes of Januarii." This statement has caused some concern to some of the anxious souls who "gladly demen to the badder end." "Most likely," says Mr. Dore, with his usual charitable interpretation of Tyndale's doings, "the Pentateuch was printed at Wittenberg, and the word Malborow was put on the imprint for the purpose of deception. It is painful to think that an intentional misstatement should be on the imprint of the first part of the English Bible ever issued." It is scarcely necessary, perhaps, to suggest that all this pain is quite needless, as there is no doubt that the book was actually printed at Marburg, as the imprint does its best to say.

It is somewhere about this point, though there is some doubt as to the precise date, that there must have occurred an incident in the translator's life of which Foxe gives a brief account. "But especially," he says, "Sathan the prince of darkenes, maligning the happy course and successe of the Gospel, set to his might also, how to empeache and hinder the blessed trauailes of that man (Tyndale): as by this, and also by sondry other wayes may appeare. For at what time Tindall had translated the fift booke of Moises called *Deuteronomium*, minding to Printe the same at Hamborough, hee sailed thereward: wher by the way vpon the coast of Hollande, he suffred shipwracke, by the which he loste all his bookes, wrytings and copies, and so was compelled to begin all againe a new, to his hinderance and doubling of his labors. Thus hauing lost by that ship, both money, his copies and time, he came in an other ship to Hamborough, where at his appoyntment M. Couerdale taried for him, and helped hym in the translating the whole 5 bookes of Moises, from Easter till December, in the house of a worshipfull widowe, Maistres Margaret van Emmerson, Anno 1529, a greate sweating sicknesse being the same time in the Towne. So hauing dispatched his businesse at Hamborough, he returned afterward to Antwerpe againe."

It is quite possible that Foxe's dating is somewhat inaccurate here, and that the incident of Tyndale's shipwreck occurred at another time; but there need be no doubt as to the reality of the incident, which no one would have any reason for inventing; and it introduces us to another worker who was destined to be of an importance only second to that of Tyndale himself in the history of the English Bible. Miles Coverdale can scarcely have been more at this stage than Tyndale's secretary, for we know that he had no knowledge of Hebrew, while Tyndale, as his comments on Hebrew usage and idiom show, had a competent knowledge of the language; but it is interesting to think that the man who was to bear the mantle of Elijah was trained for a time, like Elisha, under his great predecessor.

It is to this busy time also that the controversy with Sir Thomas More over the translation of the New Testament, to which reference has been made already, belongs. Of more permanent importance, as a straw which shows in what direction the wind is blowing, is the curious incident of the Reformer's interviews with the English envoy to the Low Countries, Stephen Vaughan, and the efforts to induce him to return to England. By this time (1531), Wolsey had fallen from power, and Cromwell was in the saddle, while King Henry, under the impulse of various influences, of which the question of his divorce was only one, was beginning to regard the question of the dominance of Rome with a somewhat different eye. In these circumstances, Vaughan was instructed by Cromwell to get into touch with Tyndale, and, if possible, to induce him to return to England. There is no need to imagine, as has been done, that this was simply a trick to get the Reformer into the power of his enemies. The whole narrative of Vaughan shows that he was absolutely sincere, and that, as the negotiations progressed, he became filled with a deep admiration for the man whom he was trying to persuade. It becomes apparent in the end that the King had been only reluctantly persuaded to allow the negotiation, and drew back after a little, while Cromwell, finding his Sovereign unfavourably disposed, and his envoy rather more enthusiastic for Tyndale than he had bargained for, finally discouraged the completion of the business, which thus came to nothing; but the real interest of the story lies in the revelation which it gives of Tyndale's purity and sincerity of motive in the prosecution of his great work. In Vaughan's report, you hear the actual man himself, speaking out of that dead past, a living voice still after four hundred years have come and gone; and the man who can question the sincerity of his utterance is not to be envied.

Here is Tyndale's answer to the advances which had been made to him, after Vaughan had suggested that if he submitted and returned to England, "the kinges royall magestie is so inclined to mercie, pitie, and compassion, that he refusethe

none which he seyth to submyt themself to the obedyence and good order of the worlde." "I perceyued the man to be excidinge altered," says the envoy, "and moued to take the same very nere vnto his harte, in such wise that water ſtode in his yees (eyes). And answered, 'what gracious wordes are these, I assure youe, sayed he, *if it wolde ſtande withe the kinges moſt gracious pleasure to graunte only a bare text of the scriptures to be put forthe emonge his people, like as is put forthe emonge the subgectes of the emperour in these parties, and of other criſten princes be it of the translation of what person souer shall please his mageſtie, I shall ymedyatly make faithfull promyse, neuer to wryte more, ne abide ij dayes in these parties after the same, but ymedyatly to repayre into his realme, and there moſt humbly submytt my selfe at the fete of his roiall mageſtie, offerynge my bodye to suffer what payne or torture, ye what dethe his grace will so this be obteyned. And till that time, I shall abide thasperitie of all chaunses what so euer shalle come, and indure my lyfe, in as many paynes as it is able to here and suffer.*'"

These are not the words of the intransigent fanatic who is so often offered to us as the essential Reformer, but the utterances of one to whom the truth was everything and self nothing. Tyndale again and again reminds us of a greater than himself in his burning zeal, in the incidents of his career, his shipwreck, his imprisonment, and his prison correspondence; here one seems to become aware of a deeper resemblance, and to catch an echo of St. Paul's great declaration, "I could wish that myself were accursed from Chriſt for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." What might have been the outcome if Tyndale had accepted the well-meant assurances of Vaughan may be doubtful; but the chances are that the end would not have been greatly different from that which was the result of his remaining in the Low Countries. At all events what was happening in England at this time was not of a character to encourage the exile to return, for the persecution of the Reformed or heretical opinion was waxing keener, and more than one of the more prominent English reformers suffered at the ſtake.

In 1531, Tyndale published at Antwerp what was destined to be the last of his translations from the Old Testament, his version of the book of Jonah. Bishop Stokesley, who had succeeded Tunstall in the See of London, named and denounced the translation at Paul's Cross, and Sir Thomas More, who was now in the thick of his controversy with the translator, commented upon it in his *Confutation.* More's violent comment is chiefly interesting for the early appearance of the inevitable Jonah joke about the whale. "Jonas," says the great Chancellor, "was never so much swallowed up with the whale as with the delight of that book a man's soul may be so swallowed up by the devil that he shall never have the grace to get out again;" which is, no doubt, very humorous, but scarcely enlightening or worthy of a man of More's intellectual standing. The little work thus elegantly characterised entirely disappeared from view, and its existence was indeed denied, until in 1861, the Rector of Ickworth, afterwards Bishop of Bath and Wells, discovered it bound up in an old volume which had been in the possession of his family for more than two hundred years.

Three years later came Tyndale's last contribution to the cause which had been so dear to him,—his revised edition of the translation of the New Testament. Though nearly ten years had thus elapsed between his first edition and its successor, we have seen that his time was pretty fully occupied with work of great importance, in the shape of the translations of the Pentateuch and the book of Jonah, to say nothing of the polemical works which had come from his pen; and the revision itself must have been a work of considerable labour, occupying a great deal of time. Since the first appearance of the translation at Worms in 1525, it had been frequently reprinted; but these reprints were in no sense new editions, being merely pirated copies of the original work, issued without any attempt to correct any errors; and none of them had been supervised by Tyndale, or authorised by him.

The natural result of the issue of successive reprints,

without any provision for the correction of errors, was that to the original mistakes which would naturally have been corrected in a properly revised second edition were added many others, so that the text was gradually being corrupted in a very undesirable fashion. Tyndale's new edition was designed not only to put an end to this progressive corruption, but to fulfil his own promise of issuing an improved text. How thoroughly he fulfilled his pledge may be gathered from the fact that the improvements which he introduced into the new rendering may be reckoned by thousands, and their effect is almost invariably to bring the translation into closer correspondence with the original Greek. In short, Tyndale was no less admirable as an editor than as a translator, and his second edition is a very remarkable monument of scholarship.

Shortly before it appeared, however, there appeared another pirated edition which deserves a moment's notice, because of its claim to be a revision of Tyndale's work, and because of the repudiation of it which Tyndale issued. This new edition, as its colophon tells us, claimed to be "the new Testament diligently ouersene and corrected and prynted now agayne at Antwerpe by me wydowe of Christoffel of Endhouen. In the yere of oure Lorde MCCCCC and xxxiiij in August." The diligent overseeing and correcting was the work of an English refugee named George Joye, who attempted to excuse what was in any case an unauthorised interference with the work of another man, and almost certainly an attempt to forestall the forthcoming edition of Tyndale himself, by the allegation of slothfulness on the part of the man whom he was trying to forestall. It never, apparently, occurred to Joye that a satisfactory revision of the translation of the New Testament was a work involving much labour, and requiring a considerable time for its execution; for his ideas of overseeing and correcting were of the most elementary kind, and the words with which he describes the long labour of the translator are, "All this long while Tyndale slept, for nothing came from him as far as I could perceive."

With this light-hearted view of a reviser's duties, and the noteworthy inducement of being paid at the rate of four pence halfpenny per sheet of sixteen leaves for his labours, Joye carried out a work which was "simply such a plagiarism as any modern laws of copyright would interdict or punish." "Not much diligence," says Mr. Demaus, "could be expected for fourpence-halfpenny a sheet; and although the printers did their part well (for the work is got up with remarkable neatness), Joye's diligence seems to have been in proportion to the smallness of his remuneration." "In the three chapters of St. Matthew, for example, which contain the Sermon on the Mount, he only ventures to make *eight* changes: in two of them he is certainly wrong; in a third he has mistaken the meaning of Tyndale; in a fourth he has misunderstood the sense of the original; a fifth is a permissible variation in the rendering of a participle; and the remaining three are grammatical trifles, such as the substitution of *shall* for *will*, *into* for *to*."

The secrets of the printing-house had a knack, as we have seen, of leaking out; and it is simply impossible to believe that Joye when he consented to perpetrate what was neither more nor less than the theft of another man's labours, did not know that another edition was being prepared by Tyndale himself, and was actually passing through the press in the very town in which he was working. We need not wonder, then, that Tyndale speaks of what was simply a barefaced theft in language adequate to the occasion. The genuine 1534 edition was published in November by "Marten Emperowr." This curious-seeming name is merely the English version of the Dutch Martin de Keyser, who translated his name into the language of the particular book which he happened to be printing at the time, calling himself Martinus Cæsar, if it were a Latin volume, Martin L'Empereur when it was French, and Marten Emperowr when he dealt with English. "Here thou hast (moost deare reader)," says Tyndale in his prefatory note, 'W. T. vnto the Reader,' "the new Testament or covenaunt made wyth vs of God in Christes

bloode. Which I have looked over agayne (now at the last) with all dylygence and compared it vnto the Greeke and have weded out of it many fautes which lack of helpe at the begynninge and oversyght dyd sowe therin. If ought seme chaunged or not all to gether agreynge with the Greke let the fynder of the faute consider the Hebrue Phrase or maner of speche lefte in the Greke wordes."

One of the copies of this 1534 edition is of considerable interest owing to the probability—it cannot be called the certainty—of its having been a gift of the translator to the ill-fated Anne Boleyn in circumstances which do the queen credit. Things were moving in England in the direction of greater freedom in the use of the Scriptures, and Queen Anne used her influence in favour of an English merchant who had been deprived of his privileges as a member of the company of Merchant Adventurers at Antwerp because he had helped in the circulation of the English New Testament. Here is her letter to Thomas Cromwell on the matter. "Anne the Queen: Trusty and right well-beloved, we greet you well; and whereas we be credibly informed, that the bearer hereof, Richard Herman, merchant and citizen of Antwerp in Brabant, was in the time of the late lord cardinal put and expelled from his freedom and fellowship of and in the English House there for nothing else, as he affirmeth, but only for that he did, both with his goods and policy, to his great hurt and hindrance in this world, help to the setting forth of the New Testament in English: we therefore desire and instantly pray you, that with all speed and favour convenient, you will cause this good and honest merchant, being my lord's true, faithful, and loving subject, to be restored to his pristine freedom, liberty, and fellowship aforesaid, and the sooner at this our request, and at your good lesiure, to hear him in such things as he hath to make further relation unto you in this behalf: Given, under our signet, at my Lord's Manor of Greenwich, the fourteenth day of May."

The queen's intercession was, no doubt, successful, and Tyndale in gratitude for this token of royal favour to the

cause for which he stood, caused a copy of his revised New Testament to be printed on vellum and beautifully decorated for presentation to Queen Anne. The copy, beautifully bound, but not in its original binding, is now in the British Museum, and bears on its edges the words " Anna, Angliae Regina," and while its connection with the Herman case is not certain, it is extremely probable, as a copy of such special quality would only be produced for a special purpose, and in this case the queen's action, and the time at which it was taken, correspond exactly to the circumstances in which such a copy might be executed and given.

A true scholar, Tyndale recognised no finality in his work, even after the thorough revision of 1534. The new edition was scarcely out of his hands before he was busily engaged upon a third, which appeared from the press of Godfried van der Haghen of Antwerp, a close business associate of Marten Emperowr, in 1535. But by the time that it came from the press, its editor was already a prisoner in the gloomy castle of Vilvorde, from which he only issued to meet his death at the stake more than a year later. The circumstances of his betrayal and apprehension are sufficiently well-known to enable us to see that they belong to the same creditable order of bigotry and treachery which marked the dealings of Johan Dobneck with the issue of the first printed English Testament, and while the result was more tragic, the means employed were even baser than those by which Dobneck wormed out the secret of the printers.

Tyndale was in the habit of spending a part of every week in visiting and helping the English refugees at Antwerp, and was thus brought into contact with many of his own countrymen, who, for various reasons, were exiles from their country. Among the men whom he thus met was a certain Henry Philips, who appeared at Antwerp with a servant, Gabriel Donne, who was in reality a Romish priest. Philips managed to ingratiate himself with Tyndale, who at this time was living in the house of his friend Thomas Poyntz, an English merchant of the city. Poyntz himself distrusted

the man; but Tyndale was of too simple and confiding a nature to cherish suspicion of a man who professed the utmost friendliness. When the treacherous plot was complete, Philips invited his friend to dine with him one day towards the end of May, 1535, and as the two companions passed in single file down the narrow passage which led from Poyntz's house, Philips, in the true style of Judas, pointed with his finger to the friend who walked before him, as a signal to the men who were lying in wait to take the man who had dared to offer God's Word to his fellow-countrymen.

Tyndale was hurried away to captivity in the castle of Vilvorde, about twenty-four miles from Antwerp, and his two betrayers returned home to reap the reward of their infamy. Donne was rewarded by promotion to the Abbacy of Buckfastleigh, in Devon, and was subsequently advanced to a Prebendary's stall at St. Paul's, where, strange to say, John Rogers, the friend and literary executor of his victim, was a prebendary at the same time. One wonders what may have been Rogers's feelings towards his brother prebendary, and still more at the ecclesiastical frame of mind which could endure to see in a sacred position a creature so base.

For rather more than sixteen months (23rd or 24th May, 1535–6th October, 1536), the Reformer lay in his cold and dark prison cell at Vilvorde, under the care of Ludwig van Heylwyghen, Lieutenant of the Castle, whose heart he seems to have won by his gentleness and patience. A single letter of the captive's has survived, addressed to the Marquis of Bergen-op-Zoom. It is of a singular pathos, and gives us a picture of the last days of the life of a great servant of God comparable only with that which we get from St. Paul's second letter to Timothy of the Apostle's last days in the Mamertine.

"I believe, right worshipful, that you are not ignorant of what has been determined concerning me (by the Council of Brabant); therefore I entreat your Lordship, and that by the Lord Jesus, that if I am to remain here during the winter, you will request the Procureur to be kind enough to send me

from my goods which he has in his possession, a warm cap, for I suffer extremely from cold in the head, being afflicted with a perpetual catarrh, which is considerably increased in the cell. A warmer coat also, for that which I have is very thin: also a piece of cloth to patch my leggings: my overcoat has been worn out; my shirts are also worn out. He has a woollen shirt of mine, if he will be kind enough to send it. I have also with him leggings of thicker cloth for putting on above; he has also warmer caps for wearing at night. I wish also his permission to have a candle in the evening, for it is wearisome to sit alone in the dark. But above all, I entreat and beseech your clemency to be urgent with the Procureur that he may kindly permit me to have my Hebrew Bible, Hebrew Grammar, and Hebrew Dictionary, that I may spend my time with that study. And in return, may you obtain your dearest wish, provided always it be consistent with the salvation of your soul. But if any other resolution has been come to concerning me, that I must remain during the whole winter, I shall be patient, abiding the will of God to the glory of the grace of my Lord Jesus Christ, whose spirit, I pray, may ever direct your heart—Amen—W. Tyndale."

"The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments." We have seen, all through, points of comparison between these two heroes of the faith; there is no profanation in placing St. Paul's prison request beside that of his brother student and lover of the Word of God.

Tyndale was not forgotten during the long months of his captivity. Thomas Cromwell, and his former envoy, Vaughan, both interceded on his behalf; but Rome was implacable, as usual, and English influence was for the moment not sufficient to force the surrender of a man so bitterly hated and so long sought for. Nine years before, he had written "if they burn me also, they shall do none other thing than I look for." Probably his only wonder, knowing as he did the tireless hatred with which he had to do, was

that he had escaped for so long. Now there was to be no escape. On the 6th October, 1536, the champion of a People's Bible was strangled and then burnt at the stake at Vilvorde. His last words, before the executioner's cord choked his utterance, were, "Lord! open the King of England's eyes." One of the grim curiosities of the past is the statement of accounts rendered by Ludwig van Heylwyghen in connection with the trial and execution of Tyndale, by which it appears that to secure the violent death of a scholar and saint cost in those days the sum of £405 9s. 6d. One wonders if even bigotry ever made a worse investment!

Douglas, dying at Otterburn, saw in his fall the fulfilment of his dream that "a dead man should win the fight." Tyndale's last hours might well have been cheered by such a premonition. Indeed, by the time that he, the foremost fighter in a great cause, had fallen on the high places of the field, the fight was already won. To how great an extent this is true appears from the fact that the next version of the Bible, that of Miles Coverdale, the first complete version, which appeared in 1535, the year of Tyndale's arrest, was dedicated to King Henry, that its next issue was printed in England, and that its third edition, printed in England in 1538, bore on its title-page the proclamation "Set forth wyth the Kynges moost gracious licence." At the Council of Convocation held in 1537, Foxe, Bishop of Hereford, dared to say that "the lay people do now know the Holy Scripture better than many of us." It was barely twenty years since Tyndale had uttered his prediction to the Church dignitary who preferred the law of the Pope to that of God, "If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth the plough shall know more of the Scripture than thou doest." The prophet was gone to his reward; but his prophecy was fulfilled.

The main facts as to his work may be summed up very briefly.

The first edition of his New Testament was that issued in

small octavo by Peter Schoeffer at Worms, together with the quarto which may have been composed of the sheets which had been printed by Quentel at Cologne, before Dobneck's interference, and which perhaps may have been completed at Worms, though, as the only extant copy of it is incomplete, it is impossible to say if this is so. The quarto form had the glosses and comments which are often alleged to have been the cause of the burning of the Testaments; the octavo form had none. The Greek text from which Tyndale translated was mainly the second edition of Erasmus's Greek Testament, of 1519, though he evidently also used the third edition of 1522, as appears from his adoption of some of the alterations which Erasmus introduced in this edition.

Tyndale's second edition of the New Testament was published, as we have seen, at Antwerp and printed by Martin de Keyser (Marten Emperowr). It is a small octavo volume of 384 leaves (numbered by mistake on the last 484). Then come the translations of "the Epistles taken out of the Old Testament, which are read in the church after the use of Salisbury upon certain days of the year," which occupy another eighteen pages. The Epistles of the New Testament, and indeed almost all the books, have separate prologues prefixed to them, of which those introducing St. Matthew's Gospel, and the Epistle to the Romans, are the longest, the latter running to 34 pages. The book contains 39 woodcuts, some of which, however, are repetitions, and there are 232 marginal notes. Several copies of this edition are in existence besides that of Queen Anne already mentioned.

The only other edition which was revised by Tyndale himself is that issued by Godfried van der Haghen, and possibly printed by his associate de Keyser. It also is a small octavo, and bears as its title "The newe Testament yet once agayne corrected by Willyam Tindale: Where vnto is added a Kalendar and a necessarye Table wherin easely and lightelye maye be founde any storye contayned in the foure Euangelistes and in the Actes of the Apostles." "Prynted in the yere of oure Lorde God. Md.& XXXV."

There were, of course, many other reprints of Tyndale's translation, even in his lifetime, including George Joye's pirated edition; but for none of these had he any personal responsibility. They were, in short, merely private ventures of the various printers who undertook them, and while they must have helped considerably to spread the Word in England, they added nothing to the more accurate interpretation of it, or to the establishment of a true text. In fact their influence must have been rather in the opposite direction, and must have tended to the corruption of Tyndale's text through the errors of a press subject to no proper correction and supervision.

The translation of the Pentateuch which Tyndale published in 1530, "at Malborow in the lande of Hesse," is in appearance a curious piebald production, for Genesis and Numbers are in black-letter, while Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy are in Roman type. This diversity of type seems to indicate that the different books were originally published separately, and then collected in a general edition. In spite of this lack of uniformity in appearance, however, Tyndale's Pentateuch is only second to his New Testament in importance, and set the standard for all subsequent Old Testament translations. Several copies of the book are extant, only one of which is perfect.

The only other Old Testament translation published by Tyndale in his lifetime is that version of the Book of Jonah which has been already referred to, and which is known only from the solitary copy discovered in 1861 by Lord Arthur Hervey when Rector of Ickworth. His letter from prison shows that he continued his Old Testament work to the last, and it is believed that he left behind him manuscript containing translations of Joshua to 2nd Chronicles inclusive.

Of the notes or glosses which gave such offence to the opponents of a vernacular Bible at the time, and have furnished so convenient a smoke-screen for their apologists ever since, it will suffice to give one or two specimens. Thus

on Exodus xxxii. 35, he has the brief comment, embodying a play upon words thoroughly characteristic of the times, "The Pope's Bull slayeth more than Aaron's calf." On Numbers xxxii. 18, "How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed?" his comment is as brief, "The Pope can tell howe." The remark which perhaps went home with most sting was that on Exodus xxxvi. 5, 6, where the people of Israel are restrained from bringing more gifts for the Tabernacle. "When" notes Tyndale, "will the Pope say Hoo! (Hold) and forbid an offering for the building of St. Peter's Church? And when will our spirituality say Hoo! and forbid to give them more land? Never until they have all." Many far more bitter things had been said for more than two centuries by men like Chaucer and Erasmus; the sting of Tyndale's comments lay in the fact that people were now not only laughing at such things, but were beginning to take them seriously, and to cry out for the amendment of the abuses which were the causes of such comments.

"Si monumentum requiris, circumspice," is Wren's epitaph in St. Paul's. If we wish a memorial to Tyndale's merits as a translator, we need look no further than our priceless Authorised Version; for Tyndale has there a monument greater and more lasting than Wren's majestic dome. It was Tyndale who set the standard for the translation of the Bible into English—a standard so high that the men who built in 1611 upon his foundation, and to a great extent with his materials, gave us the noblest example of the powers of our native tongue that exists. He was only able to use inferior materials like the version of Erasmus for his originals, yet he used them with such skill and discrimination that the best modern scholarship, with access to manuscripts of an age and accuracy of which Tyndale never dreamed, has found comparatively little to change in his work. Many of the most haunting cadences of that storehouse of haunting cadences the Authorised Version are due to him originally, and many of the happiest renderings of phrases are his also.

" By faith," says Hebrews xi. 29–34, " they passed through the Red Sea as by dry land, which when the Egyptians had assayed to do, They were drowned. By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were compassed about seven days. By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with the unbelievers, when she had received the spies to lodging peaceably. And what shall I more say ? the time would be too short for me to tell of Gedeon, of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; also of David and Samuel and of the prophets ; which through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained the promises, ſtopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, of weak were made ſtrong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens." That sounds to the ear almoſt pure Authorised Version, save for a word of difference here and there. Yet it is, save for the modernising of the spelling, pure Tyndale from the 1535 edition, the laſt that received his own corrections.

" In the Gospel of St. Mark and the Epiſtle to the Hebrews there are not more than eighty words (or, as some of these words occur two or three times, not more than ninety words in all) which are not found in our Authorised Version of the Bible ; that is to say, there are not more than four ſtrangers in every thousand words, or nine in every hundred verses." It is not too much to say that Tyndale is not only one of the firſt of translators, but also one of the greateſt founders of our English prose.

" Of the translation itself," says Froude, referring to Coverdale's Bible, " though since that time it has been many times revised and altered, we may say that it is subſtantially the Bible with which we are all familiar. The peculiar genius—if such a word may be permitted—which breathes through it—the mingled tenderness and majeſty—the Saxon simplicity—the preternatural grandeur—unequalled, unapproached, in the attempted improvements of modern scholars—all are here, and bear the impress of the mind of one man—William Tyndal. Lying, while engaged in that

great office, under the shadow of death, the sword above his head and ready at any moment to fall, he worked, under circumstances alone perhaps truly worthy of the task which was laid upon him—his spirit, as it were divorced from the world, moved in a purer element than common air.

His work was done. . . . His eyes saw the salvation for which he had longed, and he might depart to his place. He was denounced to the regent of Flanders; he was enticed by the suborned treachery of a miserable English fanatic beyond the town under whose liberties he had been secure; and with the reward which, at other times as well as those, has been held fitting by human justice for the earth's great ones, he passed away in smoke and flame to his rest."

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

Miles Coverdale and the Later Versions of King Henry's Reign

MEANWHILE in England events had been rapidly moving to such an opening of King Henry's eyes as the martyr Tyndale had prayed for, though perhaps some of the agents in the enlightenment of the King were scarcely such as he would have approved. In 1532 old Archbishop Warham died, mercifully removed from the evil to come, as he may have felt. In January of the next year, Henry was privately married to Anne Boleyn, and in March Cranmer succeeded Warham as Archbishop of Canterbury. In the same year Henry's marriage was canonically celebrated, and Thomas Cromwell, according to the Spanish Ambassador, Chapuys, was "ruling everything." In 1534 Sir Thomas More and Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, were committed to the Tower for refusing to acknowledge the Royal Supremacy, and in the same year, Convocation, presided over by Cranmer, petitioned King Henry for an English translation of the Bible, in face of an opposition led by Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, afterwards the bitter persecutor of the Reformers in the Marian reaction.

On every side the fortress of obscurantism was becoming untenable, and only one thing was needed to bring about its fall. This was a new translation, which should not be associated, as previous ones had been, with matters of bitter controversy. Tyndale's version had done the pioneer work in the assault upon the citadel of ignorance, and in the ten years between its first appearance and his death something

like fifty thousand copies of it had issued from the press; but all its associations were now with fierce strife, burnings at Paul's Cross and elsewhere, denunciations by episcopal authority, and protests against the pungent comments which had marked some of the editions, though by no means all. If there was to be any hope of a version which should be more or less generally acceptable, such a version must not be handicapped by the weight of all the bitter and harsh things which had been done and said between 1525 and 1535. Such a version was actually in preparation, and, though it did not win the general acceptance which was hoped, it proved to be the first of a series of translations which finally brought the English Bible into common use and gained for it Royal authorisation.

The man who was to be the chief instrument in this great work was Miles Coverdale—a man who differed as widely from his forerunner Tyndale as one good man can differ from another whose aims and labours are practically identical with his own. Tyndale was "ever a fighter," a man to whom personal interest or safety was nothing compared with the interest of what he held to be truth; Coverdale, with a devotion to truth perhaps in no way less than that of his fellow-worker, was of a quiet, modest, and retiring disposition which indisposed him to controversy. Tyndale was essentially a scholar, and along with his mastery of fine and nervous English went a skill and aptness in languages which made him fit to be an original worker in the field of translation, building on no man's foundation, but himself dealing at first-hand with the materials of his work; Coverdale, also a master of beautiful English, never professed to be a scholar in the sense in which Tyndale was one, and his version owes a great deal of its merit to the fact that it combines the merits of several translations, including that of his greater predecessor.

Coverdale was born in 1488, and, like John Wycliffe, was a Yorkshireman. He was connected, when we hear of him first, with the Augustine Friars at Cambridge, where he was

The first Chapter.

N ỹ begyn nynge God created hea uen ꝛ earth: and ỹ earth was voyde and emptie, and darck- nes was v- pon the de- pe, ꝛ ỹ spi:- te of God moued vpō the water.

And God sayde: let there be light, ꝛ there was light. And God sawe the light that it was good. Then God deuyded ỹ light from the darcknes, and called the light, Daye: and the darcknes, Night. Then of the euenynge and mornynge was made the first daye.

(*a*)

N* the beginning God created the Heauen, and the Earth.

2 And the earth was with- out forme, and voyd, and darke- nesse was vpon the face of the deepe: and the Spirit of God mooued vpon the face of the waters.

3 And God said,* Let there be light: and there was light.

4 And God saw the light, that it was good: and God diuided † the light from the darkenesse.

5 And God called the light, Day, and the darknesse he called Night: † and the euening and the morning were the first day.

(*b*)

OPENING VERSES OF THE BOOK OF GENESIS.

(*a*) From Coverdale's Bible of 1535; (*b*) from the First Edition of the Authorised Version, 1611. Even in so short a passage, comparison will show how faithful was the earlier rendering.

(*By permission of the British Museum.*)

brought into touch with Dr. Robert Barnes, head of the body, whom we have seen casting his faggot into the fire at St. Paul's and abjuring his heretical views. His earliest surviving writing, a letter to Cromwell, shows his piety and his love of learning. In 1529 we get a glimpse of him in Foxe's description of Tyndale's shipwreck, already quoted, and learn that when Tyndale came in another ship to Hamburg, "Master Coverdale tarried for him, and helped him in the translating of the whole five books of Moses, from Easter to December;" though, as he knew no Hebrew, his work must have been rather of a subordinate kind, consisting more of the revision of the English version rendered by Tyndale than of any original work.

Then for six years we lose sight of him, and his next appearance is as translator of the first complete English printed Bible, which appeared in 1535. It is quite probable that during this time he was engaged, at the instigation of Cromwell, who appears from this time as the main mover in the provision of a vernacular Bible, in the preparation of his new version. This volume of 1535 was originally promoted by Jacob van Meteren of Antwerp, and was perhaps printed by him, though the name of Froschover of Zürich has also been suggested as that of the printer. It was printed in black letter, and made a small folio of about twelve by eight inches, bearing date, October 4, 1535. The original title-page ran as follows: "Biblia/The Bible/that/is, the holy Scripture of the/Olde and New Testament, faith/fully and truly translated out of/Douche and Latin/in to Englishe."

The English printer Nicolson, of Southwark, who handled the edition on this side, substituted a new title-page for the original one, perhaps with the idea that a translation which claimed to be made from the "Douche"—i.e. German—might have less hope of being accepted here. His new title-page runs thus: "Biblia/The Bible: that/is/the holy Scripture of the/Olde and New Testament/faythfully translated in/to Englyshe." The book was dedicated "Unto the most victorious Prynce, and oure most gracyous soueraigne

Lorde, Kynge Henry the eyght, Kynge of Englonde and of Fraunce, lord of Irlonde &c. Defendour of the Fayth, and vnder God the chefe and suppreme heade of the Church of Englonde." The author described himself as the king's "humble subjecte and daylye oratour, Myles Coverdale." There is no royal authorisation; but the fact that such a book could appear with such a dedication shows how far the movement for an English Bible had progressed, and how great a victory for the cause had been won by the man who was now lying in the dungeon of Vilvorde. The second edition of Coverdale's Bible appeared in 1537, and was the first complete English Bible to be printed in England. This edition, first of all English Bibles, bore the words which intimated that the battle was won—"Set forth with the Kynges moost gracious licence."

In his preface, Coverdale has told us, candidly and modestly, the story of his work, and of how he was led to undertake it. "Considerynge how excellent knowlege and lernynge an interpreter of scripture oughte to haue in the tongues, and ponderyng also mine owne insufficiency therin, and how weake I am to perfourme the office of translatoure, I was the more lothe to medle with this worke. Notwithstondynge whan I consydered how greate pitye it was that we shulde wante it so longe, and called to my remembraunce the aduersite of them, which were not onely of ripe knowlege, but wolde also with all theyr hertes haue perfourmed that they beganne, yf they had not had impediment: (a manifest reference to Tyndale and his imprisonment): considerynge (I saye) that by reason of theyr aduersyte it coulde not so soone haue bene broughte to an ende, as oure moost prosperous nacyon wolde fayne haue had it, these and other reasonable causes consydered, I was the more bolde to take it in hande. And to helpe me herin, I haue had sondrye translacions, not onely in latyn, but also of the Douche interpreters: whom (because of theyr synguler gyftes and speciall diligence in the Bible) I haue ben the more glad to folowe for the moost parte, accordynge as I was requyred. But to saye the trueth before

God, it was nether my laboure ner desyre to haue this worke put in my hande: neuertheless it greued me that other nacyons shulde be more plenteously prouyded for with the scripture in theyr mother tongue then we: therfore whan I was instantly requyred, though I coulde not do so well as I wolde, I thought it yet my dewtye to do my best, and that with a good will" . . .

"For the which cause (accordyng as I was desyred) I toke the more vpon me to set forth this special translacyon, not as a checker, not as a reprouer, or despyser of other men's translacyons (for amonge many as yet I haue founde none without occasyon of greate thankesgeuynge vnto god) but lowly and faythfully haue I folowed myne interpreters, and that vnder correccyon. And though I haue fayled enywhere (as there is noman but he mysseth in some thynge) loue shall constyrre (construe) all to the best without eny peruerse judgment. There is noman lyuynge that can se all thynges, nether hath god geuen any man to knowe euery thynge. One seyth more clearly then another, one hath more vnderstondynge then another, one can vtter a thynge better then another, but noman oughte to enuye or dispyse another. He that can do better then another, shulde not set him at naught that vnderstondeth lesse: Yee he that hath the more vnderstondyng, ought to remembre that the same gyfte is not his but Gods, and that God hath geuen it to him to teache and enfourme the ignoraunt. Yf thou hast knowlege therfore to iudge where eny faute is made, I doute not but thou wilt helpe to amende it, yf loue be ioyned with thy knowlege. Howbeit wherin so euer I can perceaue by my selfe, or by the informacyon of other, that I haue fayled (as it is no wonder) I shall now by the helpe of God ouerloke it better and amende it."

Whatever be the merits or demerits of Coverdale as a translator, we have no need to be ashamed of the preface to our first complete English Bible. The true spirit of a good and Christlike man breathes through it in every sentence. If such had been the spirit in which our religious differences

had been approached on both sides, there would have been fewer pages of our religious history blotted with blood and tears, or lurid with the hateful light of persecuting fires. But Coverdale, good man, was judging others by himself, and out of the gentleness of his own kind heart attributing to others what they never possessed and therefore could not give. " Yf thou haſt knowlege therfore to iudge where any faute is made, I doute not but thou wilt helpe to amende it, yf loue be ioyned with thy knowledge." Unfortunately " loue " was juſt about the laſt thing that was " ioyned " to the many excellent qualities of the controversialiſts on either side of the great Reformation ſtruggle.

Coverdale, then, tells us several things about himself and his version. Firſt, that it was only undertaken by him unwillingly and under pressure. Who may have applied the pressure is another matter, and probably the likelieſt answer to the queſtion is that it may have been the politic Cromwell. Mr. Dore's curious conjecture, " Moſt likely it was the good Sir Thomas More and those of the new learning party with whom he was associated," may be dismissed as merely ludicrous in view of More's self-avowed attitude towards the circulation of a vernacular Bible, and his ſteady development of reactionary views in his later days. Next, his Bible pretends to be nothing more than a translation from other translations. What, then, were these other sources, upon which he relied? He tells us two of them—the Latin, by which we may underſtand, at leaſt mainly, the Vulgate, and the " Douche "—i.e. the German version. In addition, he tells us in his Dedication to the King, that he has " with a cleare conscience purely and faythfully translated this out of fyue sundry interpreters." It is pretty generally agreed that the other three interpreters whom he followed, in addition to the two already mentioned, are The Swiss-German translation of Zwingli and Leo Juda, completed in 1529 (the Zürich Bible), The Latin Bible of Pagninus, published in 1528, and Tyndale's translation, or perhaps another Latin or German version.

In a considerable part of the Old Testament (from 2 Chronicles onwards, with the exception of the Book of Jonah, and those "Epistles from the Old Testament" which Tyndale had translated), Coverdale was the first translator in the field. In this portion his main guide is the Zürich Bible. In the New Testament he prefers to follow Tyndale's last revision of 1534–5, or Luther's German version. In the Apocrypha, he is more independent than elsewhere. One more point remains to be noticed about his rendering—namely that in accordance with his own gentle nature, he inclines to the moderate view in rendering any passage where controversial matters are involved. Tyndale followed the thorough plan of discarding at once words which had been misunderstood; Coverdale, on the other hand, sometimes accepts the current term, and sometimes a more explanatory rendering.

In spite of the fact that his translation is only at second-hand, a version of a version, it would be difficult to overrate its importance, were it only for the simple reason that this was the first complete Bible to be printed in English. For three-quarters of the Old Testament, Coverdale was the first English translator under the new conditions of the press, and his influence was correspondingly great. His debt to Tyndale is large; but on the other hand he supplies an element of moderation which was not unnaturally less prominent in Tyndale, and which was necessary if the English Bible was to find the widest possible acceptance among the people of England. "The character of the one," says Mr. Hoare, comparing the two translators, "stands out as cast in a heroic mould, full of originality and creative power, massive, rugged, self-reliant, afraid of no one, seeking no one's patronage. That of the other is of a man made to follow, but not to lead, gentle and sympathetic in nature, eager to be of service to the cause of the Bible, but with nothing of the heroic or creative about him, modest, retiring, self-depreciating, leaning on his patrons almost to the point of obsequiousness, diffident and timorous. Yet each of them is the literary

complement of the other, and most assuredly our Bible could spare neither the strong virility and scholarship of Tyndale, nor the gentle tenderness and resourcefulness of Coverdale."

His contribution to our Authorised Version is scarcely less important than that of his greater predecessor. It is not that so many passages of any great length remain in which we can trace the mark of his hand in unaltered renderings; but that his exceptional sense of the grace and music of our language has left its mark on our Bible almost as much as Tyndale's gift for the strong phrase, and the striking rendering. "His relation to other translators may be said somewhat to resemble that in which, to take an illustration from the domain of music, Spohr stands to his brother composers. It is to the melodiousness of his phrasing, to his mastery over what may be described as the literary semitone, to his innumerable dexterities and felicitous turns of expression, that we owe more probably than we most of us recognise of that strangely moving influence which seems ever to be welling up from the perennial springs of the English Bible, and from the Prayer Book version of the Psalms."

The mention of the Prayer Book version of the Psalms recalls the fact that while in the Authorised Version we have the work of Tyndale and Coverdale, subjected to considerable modifications by King James's translators, in the Prayer Book Psalter we have almost undiluted Coverdale. When the Prayer Book was revised in 1662, the Gospels, Epistles, and other Scriptural passages were taken from the version of 1611; but Coverdale's translation of the Psalms was retained as being smoother and more suitable for adaptation to music —a fact which accentuates the reference made above to the musical quality of his mind and style.* Our Authorised

* In the Prayer Book Psalter, each Psalm, or, in the case of Psalm CXIX., each section of the Psalm, is headed by the opening phrase of the Latin Version, and readers sometimes remark slight differences, in tense and otherwise, between the two renderings. The reason is that Coverdale, while using the Latin, was using also the Zürich translation from the Hebrew, by Zwingli and Leo Juda, and on occasion preferred its rendering to the Latin Version.

Version owes to him almoſt as many of its moſt familiar cadences as it does to Tyndale. "My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the ſtrength of my heart, and my portion forever;" "Caſt me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me"; "For thy loving-kindness is better than life; therefore my lips shall praise thee"; "Thou Lord in the beginning haſt laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; they all shall wax old as doth a garment; as a veſture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end." Such passages teach us that Coverdale had not only the intellectual insight and the spiritual touch of a fine translator and a good man, but also the sense of rhythm, melody, and harmony, which mark the great musician in words, and which enable him to create a solemn and ſtately music out of the common words of our daily speech.

Along with this musical quality of his ſtyle, goes often a quaintness of phrasing which has disappeared, along with other things, from our present-day Bibles. That the dove "bare the olive leaf in her nebb," (Genesis VIII. 11) would not, perhaps, ſtrike a Scottish country audience as anything out of the way, but seems a little uncouth to English ears. To tell us that the Syrian archer (1 Kings XXII. 34) "shott the King of Israel between the mawe and the lunges," is possibly a needless insiſtence upon anatomical detail, and has not even the merit of greater accuracy than the more seemly "between the joints of the harness." In Psalm LXXIV. 6, "They cutt downe all the sylinge worcke of ye sanctuary with bylles and axes," brings back the old days when the two weapons of the English infantry were "bills and bows," and is perhaps as good a rendering as "axes and hammers," while in Judges IX. 53, "Caſt a pece of mylſtone upon Abimelech's head & brake his brain-panne" is both as vigorous and intelligible a description of Abimelech's humiliating end as our "and all to brake his scull."

Coverdale's later life may be summed up in a few words. After the publication of his translation, he went to Paris, where he was employed, under Cromwell's patronage, in another important Biblical venture of which we shall hear immediately, and also issued a New Testament, giving the Vulgate Latin text with an English rendering of his own. He then returned to England, and till Cromwell's death appears to have maintained close relations with the statesman. Cromwell was executed in July, 1540, and Coverdale left England for Germany the same year. He writes in 1548 to John Calvin from Frankfort, speaking of his approaching return to England "after an exile of eight years." He was made one of the Royal chaplains on the accession of Edward VI, and in 1551 was appointed Bishop of Exeter; but, as a matter of course, was deprived of his See when Queen Mary succeeded. He was now imprisoned, and lay for some time in danger of his life; but was finally released on the intercession of the King of Denmark.

He remained in exile for the second time for a period of three years, during the latter part of which time he was at Geneva. Returning to England in 1558, he was appointed six years later to the living of St. Magnus the Martyr; but he was now an old man (seventy-six at the time of his appointment), and perhaps somewhat out of sympathy with the ruling powers in Church and State, who had certainly shown no undue haste to recognise the claims of a man who had done so great a work for England, and had held such high position, and sacrificed it for the truth's sake. In any case, he resigned his benefice in 1566, and died three years later, at the age of eighty-one. His long life, though it was not without its own trials and sacrifices, contrasts with the short and stormy career of Tyndale, much as do the styles of their respective works.

Coverdale's Bible was followed in 1537 by another version, which is of great importance in the history of the English Bible, not so much in itself, as because of what grew out of it. This was the work known as "Matthew's" Bible, which

was actually compiled and completed by Tyndale's close friend and literary executor, John Rogers. Rogers was born about the year 1500. He took his B.A. degree at Cambridge in 1525, and then proceeded to Oxford, where he was a member of Christ Church, then known as Cardinal College. In or about the year 1534, he was appointed to the Chaplaincy of the Company of Merchant Adventurers at Antwerp, and there fell in with Tyndale and Coverdale. "In conferring with them the Scriptures," says Foxe, "he came to great knowledge in the Gospel of God, insomuch that he cast off the heavy yoke of Popery, perceiving it to be impure and filthy idolatry, and joined himself with them two in that painfull and most profitable labour of translating the Bible into the English tongue, which is entitled, 'The Translation of Thomas Matthew.'" This Bible was published within a few months of Tyndale's martyrdom.

In the same year in which his Bible was published he married and went to Wittenberg, remaining there till 1547. During the reign of Edward VI he was appointed Vicar of St. Sepulchre's, London, and Reader of St. Paul's; but his uncompromising maintenance of Protestant opinions led to his immediate apprehension and condemnation in the reaction under Queen Mary. Sentence was pronounced upon him by Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, on January 29, 1555, and the sentence definitely recognises his possession of the name of Matthew, as well as that of Rogers, "against thee, John Rogers, priest, otherwise called Matthew"—a fact of interest in view of the title of his Bible. On the 4th February of the same year he was burned alive at Smithfield. "He was the first martyr, of all the blessed company that suffered in Queen Mary's time, that gave the first adventure upon the fire," says Foxe.

The composition of his Bible is interesting. So far as regards the Pentateuch, the translation used is practically entirely Tyndale's. From Joshua to the end of 2 Chronicles, there can be little doubt that he is following the unpublished translations of the historical books which

according to tradition, passed into his hands on the death of Tyndale, and that the work as published closely represents Tyndale's last version of Scripture. From 2 Chronicles to the end of the Old Testament, including the Apocrypha, he follows Coverdale. This was to be expected, as there is no evidence of Tyndale's having translated any part of this section of the Old Testament, with the exception of those portions which he translated for use in public worship "after the use of Sarum," and the Book of Jonah. Rogers's use of Coverdale's version instead of that of Tyndale in the case of Jonah is not unnatural in view of the fact that he was using Coverdale for all the rest of the section, and might therefore hesitate to make a break in the case of so small a book; but he may have been unable to procure a copy of Tyndale's translation, which early became extraordinarily scarce. The whole of the New Testament, with very slight exceptions, is a direct reproduction of Tyndale's version.

Thus Rogers appears as in no sense an original translator, but simply an editor of the work of other men. Let it be said, however, that he is a diligent and independent editor who is both competent and unafraid to exercise his own judgment in the rendering of difficult passages, and in his dealing with the notes of his translators. His Bible is of folio size measuring twelve inches by eight. It is printed in black letter, and is dedicated "To the moost Noble and gracyous Prynce Kyng Henry the eyght." The title-page bears the words—"Set forth with the Kinges most gracyous licence," and the book contains prologues to almost all the books of Scripture, among which is included Tyndale's famous prologue to the Epistle to the Romans; while there are notes at the end of each chapter, some of them merely informative, but some also of a highly controversial type. The printing was no doubt done at Antwerp, and probably by Jacob van Meteren; but the expense of the venture was borne by two English printers, Richard Grafton and Edward Whitchurch.

In itself of no very great original importance, the real

significance of Matthew's Bible lies in the fact that it forms the base of all later revisions, and that first the Great Bible, then the Bishops' Bible, and finally the Authorised Version of King James are its direct descendants. The chief agent in its introduction and in securing royal authorisation for it was Archbishop Cranmer. The book seems to have reached England about the end of July 1537, and the Archbishop at once interested himself in it. "My especial good Lorde," he writes to Cromwell, on August 4, 1537, "after most hartie commendacions to your Lordeship Theis shalbe to signifie vnto the same, that you shall receyue by the bringer herof a Bible in Englishe, both of a new translacion and of a new prynte, dedicated vnto the Kinges Majestie, as farther apperith by a pistle vnto his grace in the begynnynge of the boke, which in myn opinion is very well done, and therefore I pray your Lordeship to rede the same. And as for the translacion, so farre as I haue redde therof I like it better than any other translacion hertofore made; yet not doubting but that ther may and willbe founde some fawtes therin, as you know no man euer did or can do so well, but it may be from tyme to tyme amendid. And forasmoche as the boke is dedicated vnto the kinges grace, and also great paynes and labour taken in setting forth the same, I pray you my Lorde, that you woll exhibite the boke vnto the kinges highnes; and to obteign of his Grace, if you can, a license that the same may be sold and redde of euery person, withoute danger of any acte, proclamacion, or ordinaunce hertofore graunted to the contrary, vntill such tyme that we, the Bishops shall set forth a better translacion, which I thinke will not be till a day after domesday."

Cranmer had evidently not much faith in the reality of the Bishops' zeal for the making of a better translation; and indeed the Bishops' record in this respect, both at this time and for a good while to come, is not striking. It was perhaps too much to expect of them so complete and sudden a *volte face* as would have been involved in the enthusiastic translation and circulation of a book which they had so

consistently proclaimed to be unsuitable for the laity. Cranmer's judgment of their efforts (quite accurate, as it turned out), may have been based upon his experience of some of his brethren, if credence is to be given to the anecdote of Bishop Stokesley's answer to his request for help in the translation. The story as Foxe gives it (Harley MS. 422, fol. 87), is interesting and valuable as a reflection of current opinion, whatever be its value as actual fact.

"My Lorde Cromwell mynding to haue the New Testament thoroughlie corrected deuided the same into ix or x partes and caused yt to be written at large in paper bokes and sent vnto the best lerned Bisshopps, and other lernyd men, tothintent thei sholde make a perfectt correccion thereof, and when thei hadd don to sende them vnto hym at Lambethe by a day lymyted for that purpose. It chanced that the Actes of the Apostells were sent to Bisshopp Stokisley to ouersee and correcte, than Bisshopp of London, When the day came euerymanne hadd sentt to Lambeth their partes correcte (a manifest exaggeration), onlie Stokisley's portion wanted. My Lorde of Cant. wrote to the Bisshopp lettres for his parte, requiring to delyuer them vnto the bringer this his Secretary. Bisshopp Stokesley being at Fulham receyued the lettres, vnto the whiche he made this answer, I maruaile what my Lorde of Canterbury meaneth, that thus abuseth the people in gyving them libertie to reade the scriptures, which doith nothing els but infect them with heryses. I haue bestowed neuer an houre vpon my portion nor neuer will. And therfore, my lorde shall haue his boke againe, for I will neuer be gyltie to bring the simple people into error.

My Lorde of Cant. servaunte toke the boke, and brought the same to Lambeth vnto my Lorde, declaring my Lorde of London's answer. When my l. had perceyued that the Bisshopp had don nothing therein, I marvaile quod my Lorde of Cant. that my Lorde of London ys so frowarde, that he will not do as other men do. Mr. Lawney (chaplain to the Duke of Norfolk) stode by hearyng my lorde speake somoche

of the Bisshopps vntowardnes, saied I can tell your grace whie my Lorde will not bestowe any labor or payne this way. Your grace knoweth well (quod Lawney) that his portion ys a pece of Newe Testament. And than he being persuaded that Christe had bequeth hym nothing in his Testament, thoughte it were madnes to bestowe any labour or payne where no gayne was to be gotten, And beside this It ys the Actes of the Apostells, whiche were simple poore felowes, and therfore my Lord of London disdayned to haue to do with any of their Actes.

My Lorde of Cant. and other that stode by coulde not forbere from lawghter to here Mr. Lawney's accute invensyon in answeryng to the Bisshopp of London's frowarde answer to my Lorde of Cant. lettres."

It is quite possible that the story is, as Carlyle might have expressed it, "true only symbolically"; but there can be little doubt that some such attitude on the part of the more reactionary members of the episcopal bench lay behind Cranmer's acid comment, "vntill the Bishops shall set forth a better translacion, *which I thinke will not be till a day after domesday*." It is possible to sympathise both with the badgered bishop of London, who was not nimble enough to see why what he had declared yesterday to be evil should become good to-day, and with his worried superior, to whom Lawney's repartee, if it were ever made, can have brought only a momentary relief. Cromwell duly exhibited Matthew's Bible to the king, and apparently obtained the requisite authority for the circulation of the book, for on August 13, Cranmer writes to him again, saying that he understands that authority has been granted. "My Lorde for this your payne, taken in this bihalf, I give vnto you my most hartie thanks assuryng your Lordeship for the contentacion of my mynde, you have shewed me more pleasour herin than yf you had given me a thowsande pounde." Apparently the English printers who had embarked money in the venture were not satisfied with the form of authorisation which had been obtained, for a fortnight later Richard Grafton wrote

to Cromwell, praising him for the accomplishment of "soche an acte worthy of prayse, as neuer was mencyoned in any cronycle in this realme. And as my lorde of Cantorbury sayde The tydynges therof dyd hym more good then the gyfte of ten thousand pounde"—his Grace's satisfaction having apparently multiplied by ten in the interval.

"Yet," continues the printer, "certen there are which beleue not that yt pleased the kynges grace to lycence yt to go forth. Wherfore yf your lordshippes pleasour were soche that we myght have yt lycensed vnder your preue (privy) seale. Yt shuld be a defence at this present and in tyme to come for all enmeyes and aduersaries of the same." Seemingly Cromwell answered that such formality was not necessary, for Grafton replies with tremulous eagerness after August 28, explaining that he had been put to great expense, and that he was anxious to be protected against piratical editors, who would both print badly, and "vtterly vndo your poore Orator." "This worke hath bene brought forthe to our mooste great and costly laboures and charges, which charges amount aboue the some of v c li., (£500), and I haue caused of these same to be prynted to the some of xv c bookes complete" (an edition of 1500 copies). More satisfactory authorisation is therefore sought, and a kind of copyright to protect him against piratical printers for three years.

Grafton then, out of the fulness of an eagerly Protestant (and business) heart, drafts an ingenious and ingenuous scheme for the doubly satisfactory purpose of enlightening darkened Papists and increasing his own profits. "And (as) the lacke of this worde of the allmightie god is the cause of all blyndenes and superstycion, yt maye therfore be commaunded by your lordship in the name of our most gracyous prynce that euery curat haue one of them that they maye learne to knowe god and to instruct their parysshens. Ye and that euery abbaye shuld have vj to be layde in vj seuerall places that the whole covent and the resorters thervnto maye have occasion to looke vpon the lordes lawe. Ye I wold none other but they of the papisticall sorte shuld

be compelled to haue them, and then I knowe there shuld be ynow founde in my lorde of londons dyocesse to spende away a great part of them, and so shuld this be a godly acte worthy to be had in remembrance whyle the world doth stande."

One shudders to think how close to an apoplectic fit stout and stubborn Bishop Stokesley would have been brought, if this gentle missionary scheme for the wholesale conversion of his diocese had been communicated to him. Henry, however, had other views for the monasteries than the provision of vj copies of Matthew's Bible for each of them, as was soon to be seen (1539), and we may believe that Grafton's ingenious scheme was never carried out, sympathising, perhaps, with the honest Romanists who might have been subjected to Mr. Grafton's somewhat tactless efforts for their welfare. The anxious printer duly got his edition disposed of, and the six or seven thousand pounds which he had risked in the venture were safe enough.

Here, then, we have what is really the first Authorised Version of the English Bible, though it is perhaps doubtful if its authorisation was any more official than that of Coverdale's Bible, which was circulating at the same time. The astonishing thing is that within a year of Tyndale's martyrdom, the very translation which King and Prelates had condemned and burned was being circulated in England under the express authority of the King who had condemned it. Tyndale's prayer had been answered with a rapidity which he could scarcely have hoped for when he uttered it. "By Cranmer's petition," says Bishop Westcott, "by Cromwell's influence and by Henry's authority, without any formal ecclesiastical decision, the book was given to the English people, which is the foundation of the text of our present Bible. From Matthew's Bible—itself a combination of the labours of Tyndale and Coverdale—all later revisions have been successively formed. In that the general character and mould of our whole version was definitely fixed. The labours of the next seventy-five years were devoted to improving it in detail." Surely Tyndale could have desired no more

triumphant vindication of the cause for which he laid down his life than that which was brought to it by a single year.

Yet there is almost a humorous side to the victory, conclusive as it proved to be. " Lord, open the King of England's eyes ! " How far had Henry's eyes been opened ? Not far enough, one suspects, to see the whole fulness of what he was actually doing. Cromwell was a bold man, accustomed, in his dealings with his royal master, to walk on the razor-edged bridge between life and death ; but even he never carried out a more stupendous piece of bluff than when he handed to King Henry, with a smiling reference, no doubt, to the fact that his grace of Canterbury considered it the best translation he had ever met with, the book which contained Tyndale's Prologue to the Epistle to the Romans, reprinted in full. His bluff was not called ; but if Henry had called it by opening Mr. Richard Grafton's goodly folio at the Epistle to the Romans, Cromwell might have lost his head three years sooner than he did. The humour of the situation is underlined by the fact that in 1543 King Henry decreed " that all manner of bookes of the old and newe testament in Englishe, beinge of the craftie, false, and vntrue translacion of Tindall . . . shall be by auctoritie of this present acte clerely and utterlie abolished, extinguished, and forbidden," while Matthew's Bible, embodying not only Tyndale's translations, but also his prologues, was at the same time circulating under royal licence !

Taverner's Bible, which followed Coverdale's and Matthew's two years later, in the same year as the Great Bible, has an interest as being the first complete Bible to be printed in England, but is otherwise of small importance, being the work of a somewhat eccentric, though undoubtedly able scholar. A gentleman who insisted on quoting the law in Greek to his brethren of the Inner Temple, and who used to preach before King Edward VI and his Court wearing a velvet bonnet, a damask gown, and a gold chain about his neck, was perhaps scarcely the likeliest man, whatever his gifts as a scholar, to make a good translation of the Bible.

His work, says Moulton, is "able and energetic, but somewhat capricious and uncertain." Taverner ended his days in favour with Queen Elizabeth, as High Sheriff of the county of Oxford, a position which doubtless suited a man of his decorative tastes better than preaching or translating Scripture.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

The Great Bible

DURING the year 1537, there were, in consequence of the events which we have been tracing, two Bibles, Coverdale's and Matthew's, circulating in England, both of them under royal licence. Thomas Cromwell, however, was not yet satisfied with the position, for reasons at which we can only guess. Coverdale's Bible, was, of course, only a translation at second hand, and there was always the possibility that Henry's touchy pride might discover something derogatory to his dignity in the annotations or prologues of Matthew's Bible, or that Stephen Gardiner might throw a match into what was a magazine of explosives, with disastrous results. Accordingly Cromwell judged it time to secure that royal recognition should be given to yet another version, which should be introduced to the English people with greater éclat, and with a more decided exercise of royal authority than either of its predecessors, which it might therefore be expected to supersede. He already had in mind the man for the work of the new version, and by 1538 he had him in Paris, charged with the superintendence of the undertaking. "I am always willing and ready," Coverdale had written in the Dedication of his Bible, "to do my best as well in one translation as in another." Cromwell took him at his word, and gave him the task of preparing the Great Bible, in some respects the most remarkable, as it was the most imposing of English Bibles before the version of 1611, for presentation to the English nation.

What Coverdale did as translator and editor, was to present a version of Scripture in which considerable use was made of Cardinal Ximenes' Complutensian Polyglot of 1520, and in which the chief source of new readings is Sebastian Münster's Hebrew–Latin Bible of 1534–5. Substantially, in the Old Testament, the new version follows Matthew's Bible, which means, as we have seen, that for the earlier portion, Genesis–2 Chronicles, it is a reproduction, with minor improvements, and additions which are not always improvements, of Tyndale's translations. In the New Testament the version is practically Tyndale's translation, revised, and sometimes, but not always, improved by reference to Erasmus and the Vulgate. Owing to his use of the Vulgate, Coverdale introduced into the Great Bible a number of additions to the text which are found in the Latin, but not in the Hebrew. Of these, some have maintained their position in the light of later scholarship ; but the greater number have been dropped. The extraordinary thing about the whole business is the triumph of Tyndale, and the witness borne, by the return to him, to the skill and faithfulness of the great translator.

To get the version ready for the printer was one thing, and a comparatively simple one ; to get it printed was quite another. Cromwell wished the new Bible to be a masterpiece in every respect, and its typography was to be of the highest possible character. The excellence of the Parisian press caused him to select it for the work, and the printing was entrusted to the famous Paris printer, Regnault. The work was begun under licence from the French King. " Francis, etc., to our well-beloved Richard Grafton and Edward Whitchurch, Englishmen and citizens of London greeting. Whereas by trustworthy testimony we have been informed that our most dear brother the King of the English, whose subjects ye are, hath granted you sufficient and lawful liberty of printing and getting printed the Holy Bible both in Latin and in British or English and of bringing and transporting it into his kingdom, and that ye, alike for the sake of the paper and for other honourable reasons rightfully

READING THE BIBLE IN OLD ST. PAUL'S

From a painting by Sir George Harvey.

The six copies of the Great Bible in Old St. Paul's were placed there, be it remembered to his credit, by the notorious Bishop Bonner

influencing you in this matter, have taken steps for thus printing the said Bible at Paris within this our kingdom and intend as soon as may be to send it over to England. We therefore, that you may be able to do this, empowering you jointly and severally, and also the representatives, factors and agents of both or either of you that within our kingdom in the house of any printer you and they may safely impress and print the said Holy Bible alike in Latin and in the English tongue and when it is printed and impressed may transport it into England without any interference annoyance or hindrance, provided always that ye shall so print and impress it sincerely and purely so far as in you lies, avoiding any private or unlawful opinions, and when it is so printed and impressed all imposts and custom duties have been duly paid to us and to our officers, grant and concede our special licence by these presents."

It was one thing, however, for Francis to give his licence, and quite another for it to be effective, in view of the claim of the Romish Church to override the decisions of princes even in their own dominions. The letters of Coverdale and Grafton to Cromwell show that while they were quite satisfied with the quality of the work which Regnault was doing, they were living in daily terror of papal interference. "The prynt no dout shall please your good lordship," they write on June 23, 1538. "The paper is of the best sorte in Fraunce." . . . "So trust we, (yf nede requyer) to be defended from the papistes by your lordshipes fauourable letters, which we most humbly desyer to haue. . . . We be daylye threatened, and look euer to be spoken withall, . . . but how they will vse vs, as yet, we knowe not."

By August 9, specimen proofs of the work are being forwarded to Cromwell; but in October, Bishop Bonner, the English ambassador, writes to the Chancellor—"Of late ther is a stay made att Parys towching the printing of the Bible in English, and sute made to the great mayster (Anne de Montmorency, Grand Master and Constable of France) to prouide for remedie therin; but as yet it is not

obteyned." Printing being far advanced, use was made of Bonner's privilege as an ambassador to have his luggage passed uninspected to pass sheets through the French Customs in December. On the 17th December, 1538, François Regnault was cited by the Inquisition for the crime of having printed the Bible in English on the authorisation of his own king.

The relevant part of the citation runs thus—"Friar Henry Garvais, Regius Doctor in Sacred Theology, Prior of the Convent of Preaching Friars at Paris, Vicar-General also of the venerable father Friar Matthew Ory of the same order, also Doctor of Sacred Theology, Inquisitor general of heresy in all the Kingdom of France. . . . Whereas from the translation of Holy Scripture alike of the Old and New Testament into the vernacular tongue which has come into the hands of the simple it has been found lately that some have taken occasion to err in the faith. And by an edict of the supreme court of parliament it has been provided that none shall print the Old or New Testament in the vernacular or sell printed copies. And it has become known to us that a certain François Regnault, bookseller of this city of Paris, at the present time is printing a bible in British in the vulgar tongue, by occasion of which scandals and errors might arise in the church, hence is it that we whose official duty it is not only to root out errors and heresies in faith when they have arisen but also as far as possible to obviate them . . . give command, at the instance and request of the venerable promoter of the office of the said holy Inquisition, to cite peremptorily and personally at the said convent of the Preaching Friars before us on the first day after the execution of our present letters, between the hours of two and three after noon, François Regnault and others . . . prohibiting the aforesaid persons under the canonical penalty from proceeding further to the impression of the said Bible in the vernacular tongue and from surrendering and alienating the printed sheets in their possession until, after such bible has been examined by us, it be otherwise ordained."

The springing of this mine scattered the workers at once. "Then were sent for the Englishmen that were at the coſt and charge thereof, and also such as had the correction of the same, which was Myles Couerdale, but hauing some warning what would folow the said Englishmen poſted away as faſt as they could to saue themselues, leauing behynd them all their Bibles, which were to the number of 2500, (more probably 2000) called the Bibles of the great volume, and neuer recouered any of them, sauing that the Lieftenaunt criminal hauing them deliuered vnto hym to burne in a place at Paris (like Smithfield) called Maulbert place, was somewhat mooued with couetousnes, and sold 4. great dry fattes of them to a Haberdasher to lap in caps, and those were bought againe, but the reſt were burned, to the great and importunate losse of those that bare the charge of them." Diplomatic representations were made to the French king for the recovery of the books which he had given licence to print; but relations between England and France were at this time ſtrained, and the diplomatic correspondence suggeſts that the French king was not sorry to do an ill turn to Cromwell, even though it was at the coſt of his own honour. Probably all that were saved from the wreck, at leaſt for some time, were the copies which had been committed to Bishop Bonner's care, and the sixty or eighty which were bought back from the Paris haberdasher. Mr. Pollard believes that Grafton may have succeeded in rescuing the remains of the confiscated ſtock; but there is no evidence of this except the faƈt that the English printer was in Paris in November 1539.

Cromwell, however, was a man of resource, and what could not be accomplished by means of diplomatic pressure was accomplished by ordinary business methods, though with a further expenditure of time and money. The type and presses which were being used by Regnault were bought up and brought over to England, and by April 1539 (nominally) the "Bible of the largyeſt volume" was available for issue. The real date, as Mr. Pollard has pointed out, was

1540, owing to the fact that the prevalent English reckoning at this time dated from the Incarnation, not the Nativity, nor the Jan. 1 of the Roman Civil Year.

The book thus brought to issue after such dangerous adventures is, from the technical point of view, a splendid piece of work. It is a large folio in black letter, whose pages measure fifteen inches in height and more than nine in breadth. Its title-page runs as follows: "The Byble in Englyshe, that is to saye the content of all the holy scripture, bothe of ye olde and newe testament, truly translated after the veryte of the Hebrue and Greke textes, by ye dylygent studye of dyuerse excellent learned men, expert in the forsayde tongues. Prynted by Rychard Grafton & Edward Whitchurch. Cum priuilegio ad imprimendum solum. 1539."

Of special interest is the engraved border in which the printed title, as given above, is inset. It is a wood-cut of very elaborate and complicated fashion, and is said to have been designed by Hans Holbein, which is not unlikely, as Holbein was appointed Painter Royal in or about 1536, and may be presumed to have been willing to exercise his art at the request of Cromwell. No other evidence for the design being his work exists, so far as I am aware, save such as may be found in the characteristics of the work, which is certainly a very striking, though somewhat overcrowded one. The engraving measures about fourteen inches by nine. At the top of it, the Lord Jesus Christ appears among the clouds. Two utterances, inscribed on long scrolls, proceed from His mouth, one of which, going towards the left of the picture, reads: "My word which goeth forth from my mouth, etc.," (Is. LV. 11). The other scroll rolls towards a very mild and subdued King Henry, who kneels with upraised hands at the right, and of whom it says: "I have found a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will"—an application of Acts XIII. 22, which it is not unduly harsh to describe as flattering to the king, who, however, dutifully exclaims: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet."

Below this semi-celestial prologue, comes, much more prominently, the solid earthly aspect of the affair. King Henry, very much more like himself, and quite Holbeinesque, sits on his throne, with the royal arms displayed at his feet. He hands the Word of God to the clergy on his right hand, saying to them, "These things command and teach," and to the laity, headed by Cromwell, on the left, to whom he says, "Judge righteously. . . . ye shall hear the small as well as the great," and "I make a decree . . . fear before the living God." Below again, on the right of the throne, appears Cranmer, mitred and robed, with his arms displayed at his feet, placing the Bible in the hands of one of the clergy, to whom he repeats, "Feed the flock of God," etc. On the left of the throne stands Cromwell, giving the Word to the laity, whom he addresses with the admonition, "Depart from evil, etc." . . . The statesman, like the Archbishop, has his coat of arms displayed at his feet.

Below Cranmer's coat-of-arms, a preacher is addressing the crowd in the words of St. Paul (1 Timothy II. 1), as to the offering of prayers for kings and all in authority. His audience shout "Vivat Rex," or "God save the King," presumably according to their degree or their education. Beneath Cromwell's coat-of-arms is a prison cell from which a couple of prisoners, one of them of a distinctly clerical appearance, look out. It is left to the imagination to decide whether there is here a suggestion of Christ's interpretation of His mission "The opening of the prison to them that are bound," or a gentle warning of what was awaiting those who might oppose the royal will as to the distribution of the Bible. Altogether, in spite of a certain clumsiness and over-complication, the wood-cut is a remarkable and interesting document. "It represents with great faithfulness," says Dr. Moulton, "a page of the history of the times. That the precious boon now conferred was the result of no human contrivance, is thankfully acknowledged here, and in the imprint even more clearly still: *A Domino factum est istud* ('This is the Lord's doing') are the translator's pious

words, in which the devout student of history will heartily unite."

Already by his injunctions of 1538, issued as soon as the Great Bible was well in hand, Cromwell had endeavoured to provide for its general distribution. "Item, that ye shall provyde on this side the feast of (Easter?) next commyng, one boke of the whole Bible of the largest volume in Englyshe, and the same sett up in summe convenyent place within the said churche that he have cure of, whereas your parishners may most commodiouslye resort to the same and rede yt; the charges of which boke shall be ratablie born between you the parson and the parishners aforesaid, that ys to say, the one half by yowe, and th' other half by them.

Item, that ye discorage no man pryuely or apertly from the readinge or hearing of the same Bible, but shall expresslye provoke, stere and exhorte every parsone to rede the same, as that whyche ys the verye lively worde of God, that euery christen man is bownde to embrace, beleve and folowe, yf he loke to be saved; admonyshinge them neverthelesse, to avoid all contention, or altercation therin, and to use an honest sobrietye in the inquisition of the true sense of the same, and refer th' explication of obscure places to men of higher jugement in Scripture."

These injunctions were enforced by royal decree subsequent to the issue of the Great Bible, and fines were ordained for those who were lax or contumacious as regards obedience. The royal proclamation of May 6, 1541, states—"Myndynge the execucion of his sayde former, moost godly and gracyous iniunctions: doeth straytlye charge and commaunde thet the Curates and paryshioners of euerye towne and paryshe wythin thys hys realme of Englande, not hauynge already Bybles prouyded wythin theyr paryshe churches, shall on thys syde the feaste of Alsayntes next commynge, bye and prouyde Bybles of the largest and greatest volume, and cause the same to be set and fyxed in euery of the sayde paryshe churches, there to be vsed as is aforesayd: accordynge to the former sayde iniunctions; vpon payne that the Curate and

inhabitauntes of the paryshes and townes, shal lose and forfayte to the Kynges maiestye for euery moneth that they shall lacke and want the sayde Bybles, after the same feast of Alsayntes fourty shyllynges. . . ."

We have already seen that Bishop Bonner, now Bishop of London, in succession to Bishop Stokesley, had been instrumental in the carrying out of the arrangements for the printing of the Great Bible; and when the news of his promotion to the See of London came to him in Paris, he avowed to Grafton his intention of seeing that the folk of London had facilities for reading it. "Then said Boner, . . . Before god (for that was commonly his othe) the greatest fault that I euer found in Stokesley, was for vexing and troubling the poor men, as Lobley the bookbinder and others, for hauing the scripture in english, and God willing he did not so much hinder it, but I wil as much further it, and I wil haue of your Bibles set up in the Church of Paules, at the least in sundrie places six of them, and I will pay you honestly for them and giue you hartie thankes."

Bishop Bonner, like an honest man, carried out his promise in due season, accompanying the action with a very sensible admonition as to the manner in which this new privilege, which, like all privileges, was sometimes abused, should be decently used. He came to see things differently in later days, being by no means a hero, but one of the numerous family of the Vicar of Bray, and thinking that when there was a choice between being martyred and martyring others, only a fool would choose the former course; but after all, it is not everybody who has the courage to stand by the truth when it is in the shade of unpopularity, and we can at least give him credit for his zeal in walking with Protestantism when it was in its silver slippers, when the sun shone and the people applauded it. He helped the cause of an English Bible when it was the safe thing to do; let him have such honour as may be due to that.

The Great Bible was published without any of the annotations which had been the cause of so much contention.

Coverdale had prepared notes, and pointing hands were added to the text, with other signs, of which the editor explains the significance to Cromwell in a letter dated August 9, 1538. But Cromwell was taking no risks this time, however rash he may have been in the case of Matthew's Bible. Instructions were sent to Paris that the annotations were to be omitted, and we have a wail of anguish from Coverdale on the receipt of them (December 13, 1538). "Pitie it were, that the darck places of the text (vpon the which I haue alwaye set a hande) shulde so passe vndeclared. As for anye pryuate Opynion or contencious wordes, as I wyll vtterly avoyde all soche, so wyll I offre the annotacions first to my sayde lord of Herdforde (Bonner); to the intent that he shall so examen the same afore they be put in prynte, yf it be your lordeshippes good pleasure that I shall so do."

All was in vain, however, and Coverdale's pointing hands are left pointing into empty air, with no "annotacions" to answer to them. Doubtless to explain the mystery of these strange members, and perhaps to save his own face and salve his wounded conscience, Coverdale said in his prologue, "We have added many hands in the margent of this Byble vpon which we purposed certen godly annotacyons, but for so moch as yet there hath not bene sufficient tyme mynystered to the Kinges moost honorable councell for the ouersyght and correcyon of the sayde annotacyons, we wyll therfore omyt them tyl their more conuenient leysour." Sufficient credit has never been given to a good man in difficulties for this noble effort of the imagination. An effort of the imagination, however, it remained, for the "conuenient leysour" of the council never came, any more than Felix's "convenient season."

One of the finest copies of the Great Bible, printed on vellum and illuminated, belonged to Cromwell himself, and is now preserved in the library of St. John's College, Cambridge. It is a fitting memorial of the share taken in the work by a man who, whatever his faults as a statesman, and his unlovable qualities as a man, was at least sincere and

urgent in the effort to secure for his fellow-countrymen the benefits of a free Bible.

Before the second edition of the work in which he had taken so deep an interest appeared, Cromwell had fallen. His execution took place on July 28, 1540, and the edition of 1540 was associated, not with him, but with Cranmer, who wrote a long preface for it. This edition was quickly followed by a third and a fourth, all within the year 1540. It is the fourth edition, of November 1540, which, as we have seen, bears the imprint "Ouersene and perused at the comaundement of the kynges hyghnes, by the ryght reuerende fathers in God Cuthbert bysshop of Duresme, and Nicolas bisshop of Rochester." The purpose of the association of the notorious Bible-burner with this edition was doubtless that, since the fall of Cromwell might have caused some of the nation to look with suspicion on a book so closely linked with his name, it was advisable to send it out again associated with the names of two of the more extreme of the opposite party. One tries in vain to imagine the feelings with which the Bishop of Durham submitted to allow his name to appear as sponsor for a book which, so far as the New Testament was concerned, was practically identical with that which he had denounced at Paul's Cross, and in which he claimed to have found more than three thousand errors. In this fourth edition, also, Cromwell's arms are deleted from the engraving on the title-page, though his figure remains.

The main expense of the production of the Great Bible had been borne by a haberdasher of London named Anthony Marler, and in order to indemnify him for his outlay "it was agreed," by the Privy Council on April 25, 1541, "that Anthony Marler of London, merchant, might sell the bibles of the gret volume un bounde for x s. sterl. and bounde being trymmed with bullyons for xij s. sterling." Strype tells us of the gladness with which the book was received. "It was wonderful to see with what joy this book of God was received, not only among the learneder sort, and those that

were noted for lovers of the Reformation, but generally all England over, among all the vulgar and common people; and with what greediness God's word was read; and what resort to places where the reading of it was."

On the other hand we are told that this desire for the Bible existed only in the heated imaginations of fervid partisans of the Reformation, and that the English nation as a whole was absolutely indifferent. "The great anxiety on the part of the majority of the people of England to possess a vernacular Bible," says Mr. Dore, "existed only in the Imaginations of Foxe and other party writers"; and he quotes in support of his contention the applications of the printers for the enforcement of the regulations as to the procuring of bibles. We are therefore to presume that the printers of the Great Bible were such bad business men that they printed within eighteen months seven editions of a huge folio that nobody (save a few fanatics) wanted; while it never seems to have entered into Mr. Dore's head that a printer, like any other business man, would naturally adopt every possible means of securing that his rights in a venture on which he had laid out a large sum of money were respected and enforced. To suggest that a people which bought Bibles, as we know them to have done, to the number of hundreds of thousands in a few years, was indifferent to the desire for a vernacular Bible, is surely an extreme instance of the wish being father to the thought.

The liberty thus gained was, however, soon to be restricted, though it could not be altogether withdrawn. After the fall of Cromwell, the party of reaction began to gain ground, and sought to check the further circulation of the Bible, and especially of the Great Bible. Grafton was committed to the Fleet Prison, and was bound under heavy penalties neither to print nor sell any more Bibles until the king and the clergy should come to an agreement as to a new translation—a period which, to use again Cranmer's words on an earlier occasion, "I thinke would not be till a day after domesday." Indeed, in 1542, Convocation, moved thereto

by the king, tried to arrange for a new translation, and allotted the books of the New Testament to various bishops, Stephen Gardiner, among others, having St. Luke for his share. But the venture was as unlucky as all the other efforts of the episcopate to deal with the matter. Gardiner actually suggested that ninety-nine words, among them such important words as *simulacrum* (image), *hostia* (victim), and *ejicere* (to cast out), should still remain untranslated, "on account of their genuine and native meaning, and the majesty of the matter signified by them." In other words he was making a mockery of the whole business, and had not the least intention of making a real translation. Bishop Stokesley's uncompromising refusal to have anything to do with it was ten times better than this "paltering with it in a double sense." It is not surprising, in the circumstances, that the projected Bishops' Bible of this time got no further.

In 1543 came that Act which has been already quoted, forbidding the use of Tyndale's translations, though they were circulating abundantly under the name of Matthew. In 1546 Coverdale's Testament was forbidden, and permission to read the Bible was granted only to certain classes. These restrictions were enforced with great strictness, and everywhere Bibles were sought out and burned. Indeed it seemed as though a few more years of the reaction would undo all the work of the earlier years, and submerge the nation once more beneath the tide of ignorance, when the whole scene was changed by the death of King Henry in January 1547, and the accession of Edward VI.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

The Bibles of Elizabeth's Reign; Geneva, Bishops', Douai

DURING the brief reign of Edward VI, the restrictions which had been put upon the circulation of the Bible in the latter days of Henry VIII were removed, and a period of great activity in the work of printing and publishing the existing versions followed. No new translations appeared, but in the six years of Edward's reign thirteen or fourteen complete Bibles were issued, of which seven were editions of the Great Bible, three of Matthew's Bible, two of Coverdale's, and one, with a part of another, of Taverner's. Thirty-five editions of the New Testament also appeared in addition to the complete Bibles, and of these, two out of every three contain Tyndale's version.

All this activity came to an abrupt end on the accession of Queen Mary in October 1553. One of the first acts of her reign was to prohibit the public reading of Scripture; and the prohibition of the Word of God was quickly followed up by the savage persecution of those who had been concerned with the movement for its circulation among the people. First on the long list of those who were put to death in the Marian Terror was John Rogers, the Editor of Matthew's Bible, who was burned alive in Smithfield on February 4, 1555. The spirit which was animating the Roman Church in its brief moment of triumph was manifested in the fact that even the privilege of a last interview with his wife and children was denied him. "He craved of Bonner but one petition; and Bonner asking what that should be? Mr.

Rogers replied, that he might speak a few words with his wife before his burning. But that could not be obtained of him." It seems hard to understand how the man who had been virtually a fellow-worker with him who was now his victim could show himself so callous; but perhaps Bonner had to earn his pardon for the unspeakable crime of having helped in the circulation of the Great Bible. Bonner's petty malice, however, failed of its aim. "His wife and children . . . met him by the way as he went towards Smithfield: this sorrowful sight of his own flesh and blood could nothing move him, but he constantly and cheerfully took his death with wonderful patience, in the defence of the gospel of Christ." He was the first of the three hundred or more who suffered for their faith in less than three years.

It has become the common form of our time to suggest that all that had better be forgotten, and that, after all, the Marian martyrs were merely stupid and stubborn fanatics who were more or less well-served for their contumacy. The audacious assertion has even been made that Elizabeth was responsible for the deaths of more Roman Catholics than Mary for those of Protestants. Let us grant that it is deplorable that there should ever have been persecution on either side; let us grant also that the Roman Catholics who suffered in Elizabeth's reign for the sacred right of Rome to interfere by assassination and the stirring up of rebellion in England displayed a heroism worthy of a better cause; the fact still remains that during the Marian persecution fifty-six Protestants, on an average, perished each year, as against four Catholic executions, not for their religion, but for treason, in each of the years of Elizabeth's reign. Apparently it is not necessary to tell the truth about these stern days when our nation was being born into its heritage of freedom, so long as the Reformation is depreciated; let it be remembered that it was the blood of the Marian martyrs which was the price that the people of these islands paid as the first instalment of what was yet to be paid for a free Bible, and for the right to their own souls and consciences.

The Marian persecution drove many of the leaders of the Protestant party out of England; and the harbour of refuge which attracted the most prominent of the exiles was Geneva, which, under the leadership of Farel, Froment, and finally of Calvin, had become the intellectual and spiritual centre of one half of European Protestantism. Here were gathered many men already notable in the struggle against the Papacy, and soon to become more so. In the summer of 1555, the English congregation in Geneva numbered two hundred communicants, and its head was a man who though he was chaplain to Edward VI, had his share in the shaping of the Thirty-nine Articles, and might, had he chosen, have been Bishop of Rochester, was to earn his enduring fame in connection with the Scottish, and not the English Reformation. The figure of John Knox rightly stands beside those of Calvin, Farel, and Beza on the great Reformers' Monument at Geneva, and though there is no evidence that he shared in the labours of the little group of scholars to the fruit of whose work we have now to turn, he must have been familiar with every stage of their task.

In 1557 there appeared from the Geneva Press of Conrad Badius a little octavo volume entitled "The Newe Testament of ovr Lord Iesus Christ. Conferred diligently with the Greke, and best approued translations." The title-page bears a quaint wood-cut which represents Time raising Truth out of the grave, with the inscription, "God by Tyme restoreth Truth and maketh her victorious." This little book, whose chief interest is that it seems to have been as it were a preliminary study for the greater work which was to follow it, was in all probability the work of William Whittingham, a scholar of Christ Church, Oxford, and Knox's successor in the pulpit of the English Church at Geneva, after the Scotsman's return to his own country in 1559. Whittingham was married to Calvin's sister, and the great theologian contributed to the book an "Epistle declaring that Christ is the end of the law." Whittingham returned to England in 1560 and in 1563 was made Dean of Durham. His claim

to our remembrance rests not only on the Geneva Testament, and on the Geneva Bible which followed it, but also on the fact that he was one of the translators of that version of the Psalms in metre which goes generally by the names of Sternhold and Hopkins.

Three years later there appeared in Geneva a complete quarto version of the Bible, bearing the imprint—"At Geneva Printed by Rovland Hall; M.D.LX." This was the first issue of the famous Geneva Version of the English Bible—a version which was destined to a popularity immensely greater than that of any of its predecessors or successors, save the great version of 1611, and whose influence upon the intellectual and spiritual outlook of the nation at the most urgent crisis of its history cannot be overrated. The Geneva Bible is perhaps best known to most people by its other name of "the Breeches Bible" from the fact that in Genesis III. 7, it says that Adam and Eve "Made themselves breeches." This rendering, however, it shares with Wycliffe's version, in which the verse runs, "And whan yei knewen yat ya were naked ya sewiden ye levis of a fige tre and madin brechis"; and the possession of a single peculiarity which to our minds (but not to those of earlier generations) seems humorous, ought not to obscure the great merits of a remarkable piece of work.

The work of translation, or rather of revision, was performed by a small group of the English refugees, among whom Whittingham was the most prominent. His helpers were Cole, Goodman, Gilby, and Sampson, with the veteran reviser Coverdale. Some of this little company returned to England as soon as it was safe to do so; but Anthony à Wood tells us, "Howbeit, Whittingham, with one or two more, being resolved to go through with the work, did tarry at Geneva a year and a half after Queen Elizabeth came to the crown." The two faithfuls who continued with Whittingham appear to have been Gilby and Sampson, of whom Gilby became later Vicar of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, and Sampson Dean of Christ Church, Oxford.

So far as its translation goes, the Geneva Bible is based mainly, as regards the Old Testament, on the Great Bible, and as regards the New Testament, on Whittingham's Geneva version of 1557, which was itself a revision of Tyndale's version. The Hebrew and Greek originals, however, were carefully consulted, and large use was made of the suggestions offered by the French and German translations, and especially of Beza's famous Latin version. In fact the scholarship of this new version was thoroughly up to date, and the rendering offered was the best that the time could produce.

In addition to its merits as a translation, the Geneva Bible offered many other attractions. Its quarto form was much more convenient than the cumbrous folio of the Great Bible, which was barely portable, however magnificent, and the price was in proportion to the bulk, so that the Geneva came far more within the reach of the less wealthy members of the community than its predecessor. Perhaps an even happier change was the substitution of our modern Roman type for the picturesque but inconvenient black letter of the Great Bible, to which the Authorised Version, of 1611, unfortunately for its own interests, returned. Here, too, was seen for the first time in a complete Bible that division into verses which Whittingham had adopted in his 1557 Testament from R. Stephen's plan of 1551. The division thus made has been unfortunate in respect of the way in which it often obscures the literary flow of narrative or poem; but there can be no doubt as to its extraordinary convenience in the facilitation of reference. Here again the use of italics to mark words which were inserted to complete the sense, but which do not occur in the Hebrew or the Greek, was a very important first step in the direction of familiarising the reading public with one of the elementary facts of Biblical criticism.

To the average Bible reader of Queen Elizabeth's reign, the feature which seems to us least desirable was probably that which constituted one of the chief attractions of the

Photo *Mansell*

GEORGE GISZE

Holbein's splendid portrait of one of the German merchants of the Steelyard, a trading company some of whose members were active in bringing the translated Bible into England.

book. This was the elaborate apparatus of notes, illustrative and critical, and not infrequently controversial, though the proportion of polemical matter in the Geneva Bible is by no means large. Out of the two hundred and fifty notes which the Geneva translators added to the Epistle to the Romans, for example, Dr. Moulton has pointed out that not more than six or seven can be called Calvinistic. The great bulk of the commentary which the translators had provided was of a character which could or need offend nobody; and the value of an apparatus which, so far as possible, made the Bible its own commentary, was increased by the severe restrictions which Elizabeth, who had no great love for advanced Protestantism, placed upon preaching. With a thoroughly modern outlook, the editors had also provided their translation with maps, wood-cuts, and tables, together with an appendix of metrical psalms. With such merits and attractions, the new edition of the English Bible could scarcely fail to win at once a place for itself in the minds and hearts of the English people. "Neither cumbersome nor costly," says Mr. Hoare, "terse and vigorous in style; literal, and yet boldly idiomatic, the Genevan version was at once a conspicuous advance on all the Biblical labours that had preceded it, and an edition which could fairly claim to be well abreast of the soundest contemporary scholarship."

One honour has often been attributed to the Geneva Bible which it did not and could not possess. In the wonderful series of pageants with which our pageant-loving ancestors welcomed Queen Elizabeth when, on January 14, 1559, she rode from the Tower through London to be crowned at Westminster, was a notable conceit or group of conceits at "The Little Conduit" in Cheap. Here there were two hills, of which the northern one represented the Hill of the Dead Tree, stony and barren, with one sitting mourning and in rags under the dead tree. Above his head was a label bearing his name—A Decayed Common Weal. On the south rose the Hill of the Green Tree, sprinkled with flowers, and with a figure in gay apparel standing under its label—

A Flourishing Common Weal. Forth from between the hills came Old Time, with his scythe, leading a girl—the maiden Truth, clad in white silk, and bearing in her hand a book whose title was *Verbum Veritatis*, the Word of Truth. The Queen stopped before Truth, who offered her the book. Elizabeth took the volume, and kissed it, then holding it high in both hands, she laid it upon her bosom. But the book which she thus accepted was not, as has been said, the Geneva Bible, which was not due to make its appearance for another year. It was something even more interesting—a manuscript copy of the Four Gospels in Wycliffe's version, which is now in the John Rylands Library, Manchester. So the old prophet of Reform was honoured in the day of the triumph of the truth which his eyes had beheld from afar.

The Geneva Bible leapt at once into deserved popularity. During the reign of Queen Elizabeth alone, seventy editions of it were published. Nearly two hundred editions of it are known to have been published before it ceased to be printed in England (last quarto in England 1615, last folio, 1616). After its production in England had ceased, many editions continued to be produced in Amsterdam by the Dutch printers, and the last folio issued by them (with the English imprint of Thomas Stafford) bears the date 1644. It has been reckoned that one hundred and fifty thousand copies were imported from Holland after the book had ceased to be printed in England; and indeed one of the grievances alleged by the Puritan party against Archbishop Laud was that he had prohibited further importation of their favourite translation.

Scotland also took up the Geneva Bible as its own particular treasure. The first Bible ever printed in Scotland, the famous Bassandyne Bible, is a reprint of the folio edition of the Geneva Bible, issued at Geneva in 1562. The printer's imprint of the Old Testament reads—" Printed in Edinbvrgh Be Alexander Arbuthnet, Printer to the Kingis Maiestie, dwelling at ye Kirke of feild. 1579. Cum gratia et Privilegio

regiae maiestatis." The imprint of the New Testament gives the Bible its generally known name. "At Edinburgh printed by Thomas Bassandyne, MDLXXVJ, cum privilegio." Thus Scotland got her first printed Bible, which was destined to be the nurture of her spiritual life and her independence for many a long year of strife and hardship, from the spot where Darnley was slain, and near where the University of Edinburgh now stands.

The price of the new Scottish Bible was fixed by the General Assembly of the Church at five pounds payable in advance by each parish subscribing; of this sum £4 13s. 4d. was the price of the Bible, the other six shillings and eightpence being for expenses, presumably of distribution. This was the book which nourished the spirit of the men who marched with Leslie to Duns Law, Newburn and Marston Moor; and even in later days when King James's version was beginning to win its way, still fed the zeal of the men of Rullion Green and Drumclog in the Covenanting struggle. Even as late as the close of the eighteenth century a Geneva Bible was still in use in the church of Crail in Fife.

In England the popularity of the Geneva Bible, in spite of the efforts made to supersede it, lasted up to and through the Civil War. The stern and uncompromising faith of the Puritan party found its warrant not only in the text of their favourite translation, but in the strongly Calvinistic comments and notes, few though these were, as we have seen, in comparison with the explanatory and exegetical helps. The fierce zeal of the men whose doctrine was that God had given His saints power to bind the kings of their unbelieving opponents with chains and their nobles with links of iron found only too ready fuel in notes such as that to which King James so strongly objected on King Asa's treatment of his mother (2 Chronicles xv. 16): "Herein he shewed that he lacked zeale, for she ought to have dyed."

That love of extraordinary and uncouth Scriptural names which was so frequent a subject of ridicule to those

who could not understand the true piety that underlay the Puritan's grim exterior, was encouraged by the wonderful note at the end of 2 Maccabees, with its list of suitable names for a Christian father and mother to choose from, "Elichoenai, Gazabar, Pedahel, Retrabeam, Tanhumeth, Sabteca, Vopsi, Zaccur," and so forth; while the Episcopate could scarcely have been expected to approve very whole-heartedly of a note such as this, which may even have been a spur to prick the sides of their somewhat laggard intent towards the production of the Bishops' Bible, which was to sweep the Geneva from the field, but was unfortunately itself swept by its uncourtly rival—Rev. IX. 3, "Locusts are false teachers, heretikes, and worldlie suttil prelates, with Monkes, Friars, Cardinals, Patriarkes, Archbishops, Bishops, Doctors, Baschelers, and Masters which forsake Christ to mainteine false doctrine." We need scarcely wonder that this was rather too strong meat even for the Elizabethan Bench, and that they straightway resolved that they would have a Bible of their very own, untainted by such "opprobrious epithets."

The more modern attitude of mind characteristic of the Geneva editors in some respects is shown by the fact that in the title of the Epistle to the Hebrews, instead of the misleading "Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrewes," of the Authorised Version, the Geneva version has simply "The Epistle to the Ebrewes"; while "The Argument" with which the Epistle is prefaced makes a candid statement of the doubts about its authorship. "Forasmuche as diuers, bothe of the Greke writers and Latines witnesse, that the writer of this epistle for iuste causes wolde not haue his name knowen, it were curiositie of our parte to labour muche therein. For seing the Spirit of God is the autor thereof, it diminisheth nothing the autoritie, althogh we knowe not with what penne he wrote it. Whether it were Paul (as it is not like) or Luke, or Barnabas, or Clement, or some other, his chief purpose is" . . . etc.

On the other hand the characteristically sombre Puritan

attitude towards all amusements that savoured of "the pride of life" is seen in the deliciously unconscious humour of the heading to St. Mark's account of the murder of the Baptist, where the editors have gravely written, "The inconvenience of dauncing"—Quite so! It was, however, not a Puritan, but merely a typographical error which made the Edition of 1562 give us the worldly Beatitude, "Blessed are the place-makers," instead of the original "Blessed are the peacemakers." The remarkable popularity of the annotations of the Geneva Bible is witnessed to by the fact that as late as 1810 they still continued to be added in some instances to the text of the Authorised Version of King James, which was surely enough to have made that virtuous monarch turn in his grave!

The astonishing success of the Geneva Bible brought about a difficult situation for the heads of the Church in England. On the one hand, the new version was manifestly superior to the Great Bible, which was the official Bible of the time; on the other, it was impossible for the leaders of a Church whose characteristic note has always been comprehension, coupled naturally with as little alteration as may be of existing forms and formularies in any case, to adopt as the standard Bible of the Church one whose annotations were avowedly Puritan, and whose characteristic note was uncompromising root and branch exclusiveness of all forms of doctrine save one. Perhaps it was especially impossible, in view of the fact that if there was one thing that Elizabeth stood for it was she would not be the leader of any one section of her subjects, but in all things the Queen of England. She was a Protestant Queen in virtue of the fact that she ruled over a nation in which the strongest element was Protestant; but her main desire was not to secure a triumphant Protestantism whose foot should be on the neck of English Romanism, but rather a working compromise under which the lion and the lamb might lie down together, which creed should be cast for which part being determined by circumstances.

"The Genevan version had obtained a large circulation," says one historian of the English Bible, "and its mischievous glosses were undermining the Church of England." It seems rather a poor opinion to cherish of the Church of England, to believe that it was so feeble as not to be able to withstand the influence of a few expressions of opinion on the part of some of its own members; but undoubtedly Parker, Archbishop of Canterbury, Calvinist though he was himself, was largely influenced towards the preparation of a new version by the fact that the Geneva annotations sinned against the essential spirit of comprehension which marked the Elizabethan Church. As early as 1542, a plan for a new translation had been decided upon by Convocation, and the parts of the work had been allotted to various bishops and other scholars of the Church; but, as we have seen, this plan fell through, owing to the determination of the Roman section, and especially Gardiner, to retain so many Latin words as to put a fool's cap on the translation. In 1561, Richard Cox, Bishop of Ely, wrote to Cecil urging a new version. "Another thing that is worthy to be consydered, the translation of the bible to be committed to mete men and to be vewed ouer and amended. I called apon it to bothe my masters tymes sed frustra. Yet god be praised, ye haue men hable to do it thoroughly. Thus muche I signifie to you because god hath apoynted you a speciall instrumente to the furtheraunce of his heavenly truthe, vnder so gratiouse a soverayne, who I trust does not mislyke the apologie."

It took some time after this for arrangements to be entered upon, and it was not until November 26, 1566, that Archbishop Parker wrote to Cecil intimating that the parts had been allotted to various men. "Sir," he said, "I haue destributed the bible in partes to dyuerse men, I am desierus yf ye coud spare so moche leysour eyther in mornyng or evenyng: we had one epistle of S. Paul or Peter or Jamys of your pervsinge to thentent that ye maye be one of the buylders of this good worke in christes churche, although

otherwise we account youe a common patterne to christes blessed word and religion, thus God kepe your honour in helthe, from my house this xxvj of novembre.

Your honours

MATTH. CANT."

Probably, however, the bishop's offer of an odd epistle to the statesman was merely a gentle piece of flattery; in any case Cecil took no part in the work, though he continued to take an interest in its progress.

Eventually the allotment was completed, and Parker's list (*Domestic State Papers*, Elizabeth, xlviii, 6, 11), tells us how the work was divided. The Archbishop himself took Genesis, Exodus, the first two Gospels, and the Pauline Epistles, with the exception of Romans and 1 Corinthians—a fairly big undertaking for a busy man. Leviticus and Numbers were probably the work of Andrew Pearson, Canon of Canterbury, who was also responsible for Job and Proverbs. Deuteronomy was entrusted to William Alley, Bishop of Exeter, and the Psalter seems to have fallen to Thomas Bacon, a Prebendary of Canterbury, or perhaps to Thomas Bickley, afterwards Bishop of Chichester. This allocation was owing to the strange views as to a translator's duties held by Bishop Guest of Rochester, to whom the Psalms were first entrusted. Joshua, Judges, Ruth, and 1 and 2 Samuel fell to Richard Davies, Bishop of St. David's, Kings and Chronicles to Edwin Sandys, Bishop of Worcester. Ecclesiastes and Canticles were the work of Andrew Perne, Dean of Ely; while the Apocryphal Books were divided between John Parkhurst, Bishop of Norwich, and William Barlow, Bishop of Chichester. Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Lamentations were committed to Robert Horne, Bishop of Winchester, Ezekiel and Daniel to Thomas Bentham, Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, and the Minor Prophets to Edmund Grindal, Bishop of London.

In the New Testament, the first two Gospels fell to the Archbishop, as we have seen, and Luke and John to Edmund

Scambler, Bishop of Peterborough. Acts and Romans were the task of Richard Cox, Bishop of Ely, Romans and 1 Corinthians that of Gabriel Goodman, Dean of Westminster. The Archbishop being responsible for the rest of the Pauline Epistles, the list closes with the Canonical Epistles and the Apocalypse, which were the work partly of Nicholas Bullingham, Bishop of Lincoln, and partly of Hugh Jones, Bishop of Llandaff.

From this list, which must be held as only approximately correct, it will be seen that the new version certainly deserved the title by which it has always been known—The Bishops' Bible, for nearly all the translators either were or afterwards became Bishops. On September 22, 1568, Archbishop Parker wrote as follows to Cecil: "Sir, after much toyle of the Printer and sum Labors taken of sum parties for the setting owte and Recognising (revision) of the Englishe bible, we be nowe come to a conclusion for the substance of the booke. Sum ornamentes of the same be yet lacking, prayeing your Honor to beare in pacience till yt be fully reddy. I do meane by gods grace, yf my health will serve me better than yt is at this tyme, to present the Quenes highnes with the first, as sone as I can here her Maiestie to be come to Hampton Courte which we here will be within eight or nyne dayes. Which god prosper, and send to your honor grace and health as I wishe to my selfe. From my howse at Lambith, this xxij of September

Your Honors loving Frende,

MATTH. CANT."

The "ornamentes" referred to in this letter are the engraved portraits of Leicester and Cecil which somewhat strangely adorned the stately folio which was duly presented to Queen Elizabeth on October 5, 1568, by Cecil, the Archbishop's health not having come up to his hopes of it. The extraordinary "ornamente" of an engraving of Leda and the Swan, with other equally sacred engravings from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which caused the third edition of this

A COVENANTING PREACHING

From a painting by Sir George Harvey.

It was on the Text and Notes of the Geneva Bible that the stern fibre of Puritanism in both Scotland and England was nourished.

Bible (1572, the second folio edition), to be known as the "Leda Bible," were not found in the first edition, and were probably inserted by a thrifty printer who had bought the stock and wished to get some use out of it. "These incongruous figures were severely commented upon at the time (small wonder!) and were never afterwards used."

Indeed, in spite of the undoubtedly adequate scholarship of the imposing list of Church dignitaries who were responsible for the Bishops' Bible, the result of their combined work was anything but satisfactory. Archbishop Parker as Editor seems to have had his own troubles with his learned team. Bishop Guest of Rochester, in returning the portion of Scripture which had been committed to him—the Psalter,—apologises to his superior for "his rude handling of the Psalms"; and truth to tell the apology was not uncalled-for, for his ideas of a translator's duty were, to say the least of it, unusual. "I have not altered the translation," he says, "but where it gave occasion of an error. As at the first Psalm, at the beginning, I turn the preterperfect tense into the present tense: because the sense is too harsh in the preterperfect tense. Where in the New Testament one piece of a Psalm is reported, I translate it in the Psalms according to the translation thereof in the New Testament, for the avoiding of the offence that may rise to the people upon divers translations."

This, however, was apparently too much for Archbishop Parker, and the work of this chartered libertine of translation seems to have been scrapped in favour of that of one or other of the two Canterbury "T.B.s", Thomas Bacon or Thomas Bickley. The imagination falters before the task of picturing the Olympian wrath of the Bishop of Rochester when he learned that his laudable efforts to civilise the sweet singer of Israel and restore him to consistency with the rest of Scripture had been rejected in favour of the commonplace accuracy of a mere prebendary. It is only fair to say that Bishop Guest seems to have been alone in his ideas of the liberty allowed to a translator, and that the rest of the work was carefully and conscientiously done.

Nevertheless, the Bishops' Bible must be pronounced a comparative failure. Some of the work is excellent; but there was a lack of the thorough supervision which would have been needed to make what was virtually a mosaic of different men's work into a coherent unity. Archbishop Parker seems to have exercised a general editorship, in addition to the very large share of work which he undertook himself; and, in spite of his personal excellence as a scholar, it was quite impossible for so busy a man to give the work the constant and close attention which it needed. The consequence is that the general effect is patchy and uneven, and in spite of the high authority under which it was introduced to the world, it "has been justly ranked among the least successful of our English versions." It did not please scholars, and the most destructive criticisms upon it came from a famous Church of England scholar, Lawrence, Headmaster of Shrewsbury. It was cumbrous, though splendid, in get-up, and so ill-suited to the convenience of the public; costly, and so ill-suited to their purse. Accordingly, while it superseded the Great Bible, it was never popular, and its nineteen editions in forty years compare very poorly with the seventy or so editions of its real rival the Geneva Bible, in the same period. It apparently ceased to be printed just five years before the appearance of the great version of 1611, for the last known edition is the folio of 1606, which is of extreme rarity, though copies of the other editions are frequently met with. The real official English Bible was not due to arrive for another forty-five years. Let it be freely admitted that when it did come, its excellences were so great as to make ample atonement for the demerits of its predecessor.

The last version which we have to mention, and can do little more than mention, before the appearance of that rendering which is the supreme glory of our sacred scholarship, is, strictly speaking, out of the line of the development which we have been tracing; but it deserves notice, not only because of its position as the Bible of a large section of

our fellow-countrymen, but also because it has been rightly described as a Roman Catholic counterpart to the Geneva Bible. The Geneva represented the effort of the extreme Protestant and Calvinistic section of the English people to bring England into line with Continental Calvinism; the Rheims and Douai Bible represents the effort of the extreme section of English Romanism, under the guidance of the Jesuits, to bring England back into line with the Romish Church. That the idea of the translators was simply to provide a counter-irritant to the versions of Scripture published by the Reformers, is quite openly avowed by them in their prefaces to the Rheims New Testament and the Douai Old Testament. The Church which they represent has not moved one inch from its old position that the giving of the Bible to the laity in the vulgar tongue is simply, to use the translators' phrase, casting "the holy to dogges and pearles to hogges."

"Which translation," says the Preface to the Rheims New Testament, "we do not for all that publish vpon erroneous opinion of necessitie, that the holy Scriptures should alwaies be in our mother tonge, or that they ought, or were ordained by God, to be read indifferently of all, or could be easily vnderstood of euery one that readeth or heareth them in a knowen language: or that they were not often thrugh mans malice or infirmitie, pernicious and much hurtful to many: or that we generally and absolutely deemed it more conuenient in itself, and more agreable to Gods word and honour or edification of the faithful, to haue them turned into vulgar tonges then to be kept and studied only in the Ecclesiastical learned languages: Not for these nor any such like causes doe we translate this sacred booke, but vpon special consideration of the present time, state, and condition of our countrie, vnto which diuers thinges are either necessarie, or profitable and medicinable now, that otherwise in the peace of the Church were neither much requisite, nor perchance wholly desirable."

Manifestly this is putting things plainly with a vengeance.

So long as the Church is allowed to sleep in peace, let the laity be kept in their old ignorance of the Word of God; but when these pestilent and inconvenient heretics insist on giving it to the people (a thing which we still believe to be quite unnecessary), let us give it also in our own fashion, to take, so far as may be, the wind out of their sails, and to teach the people that "Codlin's the friend, not Short." The avowed object of the version, to quote the translators again, is "for the more speedy abolishing of a number of false and impious translations put forth by sundry sectes, and for the better preservation or reclaime of many good soules endangered thereby."

The translation thus forced from the Roman Church by the weight of circumstances was the work of three members of the English College, then situated at Rheims, whither it had been shifted from Douai, to which town it subsequently returned before the publication of the second part of the work, the Old Testament. The three translators were Gregory Martin, William Allen (afterwards Cardinal) and Richard Bristow. Dr. J. Reynolds and Dr. Worthington are also supposed to have been associated with the three most prominent workers, of whom Martin appears to have borne the heaviest part of the burden. The inception of the work was due to Cardinal Allen, whose letter recommending it affords further evidence of the attitude of his Church towards the question of translation. "Perhaps," he says, "indeed it would have been more desirable that the Scriptures had never been translated into barbarous tongues (how barbarous Shakespeare had amply shown before the Cardinal's work was completed!) nevertheless at the present day, when either from heresy or other causes, the curiosity of men, even of those who are not bad, is so great, and there is often such need of reading the Scriptures in order to confute our opponents, it is better that there should be a faithful and catholic translation than that men should use a corrupt version to their peril or destruction."

The work appears from the College Diaries to have been

begun about March 16, 1578, and finished in March 1582. The New Testament was published in that year at Rheims, and bears the imprint, "Printed at Rhemes by Iohn Fogny, 1582. Cvm privilegio." The Old Testament was then ready for publication also, but the issue was held up, as the Preface to the New Testament tells us, "for lacke of good meanse to publish the whole in such sort as a worke of so great charge and importance requireth;" surely a most extraordinary confession of the parsimony or carelessness of the great Church which allowed such an undertaking to languish for twenty-seven years, while the Reformers' versions which it was designed to "abolish" were multiplying every year. The Old Testament was not published until 1609, by which time the Geneva Bible, which was the special poison for which the Douai version was to be the antidote, had gone through scores of editions. To say the least of it, this was giving the antidote a poor chance, and is a significant indication of the little importance which the Roman Church then, as always, attached to the Scriptures in any form.

The translation was made exclusively from the Vulgate, and the editors devote a considerable part of their preface to arguing, with some skill, in favour of Jerome's version, as against Greek and Hebrew texts. Their main position, that the Vulgate text is more correct than the extant manuscripts, because Jerome used manuscripts older than any of those available to sixteenth-century scholars, is the natural one to take up, and would be quite tenable, were it certain that the Vulgate itself had come down through the centuries without corruption. But nothing is more certain than that this is not the case, and that the Vulgate has suffered not less, and probably more, because of its constant use and multiplication, from the same causes of corruption which affect all other texts of Scripture, or of any other writings. Indeed the need for an examination of the condition of the Vulgate text had been admitted by the Council of Trent.

Accordingly the value of the Rheims and Douai version is seriously diminished by the fact that it is only a version of a

version, and that a much corrupted one. With this proviso, however, it should be admitted that the translators gave a rendering of their material (such as it was) which Dr. Moulton has described as "literal and (as a rule, if not always), scrupulously faithful and exact," while another critic has described it as "even slavishly deferential" to the Latin text.

It is this slavish deference which has produced the almost fatal defect of the translation—namely that whatever language it may be written in, it certainly is not written in English. It is a question of the old story of Bishop Gardiner and his "majestic" words over again; only where Gardiner wanted a matter of a hundred or less to be retained in their Latin form, the editors of the Rheims and Douai version want to permeate the whole Bible with their ecclesiastical jargon. It may be granted that they argue with considerable acuteness in favour of their view, asking why, if Raca, Hosanna, and Belial be retained in their original form, the usage may not be extended to other like words. The real answer, of course, to such a position, is that if you carry out this principle with the thoroughness which the translators demand, then the reason for translating at all completely disappears. This, of course, is the true position of the Roman Church; but the Douai translators did not carry it out logically, for the reasons already quoted from their preface.

It was carried out far enough, however, to ruin the version as English. What can one accustomed to the exquisite phrasing of the twenty-third Psalm make of this? "Thou hast fatted my head with oyle: and my chalace inebriating how goodlie is it! . . . And that I may dwel in the house of our Lord, in longitude of dayes." What the translators may have understood by their rendering of Psalm LVII. 10, "Before your thorns did understand the old briar: as living so in wrath he swalloweth them," remains a mystery; certainly it was intelligible to none of their readers. "The society of his passions" seems a poor exchange for "the fellowship of his sufferings"; while the stateliness of the

following passage is rather the ſtrut of a tenth-rate pedant than the majeſtic sweep of our own rendering.

"To me the leaſt of all the sainctes is giuen this grace, among the Gentils to euangelize the vnsearchable riches of Chriſt, and to illuminate al men what is the dispensation of the sacrament hidden from worlds in God, who created al things: that the manifold wisedome of God may be notified to the Princes and Poteſtats in the celeſtials by the Church, according to the prefinition of worlds, which he made in Chriſt Jesus our Lord"; "Our wreſtling is not againſt flesh and bloud: but againſt Princes and Poteſtats, againſt the rectors of the world of this darkenes, againſt the spirituals of wickednes in the celeſtials." Very fine and mouth-filling, no doubt—but what else? "A very pretty poem, Mr. Pope," said Bentley to the author of the translation of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, "but you muſt not call it Homer." So here the Rheims translators have collected a resounding "derangement of epitaphs"; but St. Paul would probably have observed that at leaſt he generally talked sense, and that he once remarked that he had rather speak one word so as to be underſtood of his hearers than a thousand in an unknown tongue. Such gems as those quoted are countless. "Purge the old leaven that you may be a new paſte, as you are azymes." "He exinanited himself." "The passions of this time are not condigne to the glory to come." It would be hard to choose the passage to which the palm for absurdity should be given; but the translation of Isaiah XIII. 22 is worth considering as a candidate for it. "The Syrach owls shall answer, and mermaids in the temples of pleasure." Fuller described the version as "a translation needing to be translated," and he was not far wrong.

On the other hand, it muſt be admitted that so far as their absurd principle and their obscurantiſt theory allowed, the Rheims and Douai translators did their beſt to give a faithful rendering, and that their anti-Proteſtant bias is seen, not so much in the text as in the notes, which have been described by a member of the Roman Church as "virulent, and

manifestly calculated to support a system, not of genuine Catholicity, but of Transalpine Popery." In this respect they may be written off against the Calvinistic annotations of the Geneva Bible, leaving the two renderings of the text to be judged on their merits. There can be little doubt as to what the verdict should be. The Geneva Bible is immensely the superior of its rival, though here and there the Rhemish translators have caught the meaning of a phrase with an accuracy which the Geneva divines have missed, a notable instance of this being " our lamps are going out " of Matthew xxv. 8, where the Revisers have returned to the Douai rendering.

Dr. Moulton's verdict may be quoted as adequately summing up the true position of the Douai Bible, both as to merits and defects—" Every other English version is to be preferred to this, if it must be taken as a whole; no other English version will prove more instructive to the student who will take the pains to separate what is good and useful from what is ill-advised and wrong."

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THE PILGRIM FATHERS FACE THE UNKNOWN

With a pitiless sea behind them, and a more pitiless foe before them, the Pilgrim Fathers find comfort and strength in the Word of God.

BOOK FIVE

THE BIBLE IN ENGLAND; THE AUTHORISED VERSION AND AFTER

CHAPTER TWENTY

The Hampton Court Conference

IN some respects the Hampton Court Conference of 1604 was the most futile, as in others it was the most fatal, of all conferences ever summoned in our land to consider questions of religion and Church discipline; but in one aspect it was the most fruitful in good of all ecclesiastical assemblies that ever met, for it was "the only begetter" of that great version of the Bible which ever since has been not only the glory of our English speech, but the source of untold strength and comfort to the nation.

The Conference which met on January, 14, 16, and 18, 1604, in the old palace of Cardinal Wolsey at Hampton Court, was actually summoned, not to deal with any such matter as a new version of the Scriptures, but with a very different business. Already the Elizabethan compromise, such as it was, between the two wings of the Church of England, was breaking down. Latterly, in the reign of Elizabeth, the process of repression of the Puritan party within the Church had been carried out with considerable severity, Archbishop Grindal, Parker's successor, being forced to retire from his office because of his approval of the Puritan methods and practices. But there still remained within the Church, in spite of the 1593 ejection of nonconforming Puritan clergy, hundreds of conforming Puritan clergy, who were serving

the Church loyally, and "with a missionary zeal and a pastoral energy to which no other section could pretend" (Trevelyan, *England under the Stuarts*, p. 77).

The coming of Elizabeth's successor, a competent scholar, king of a land where Calvinism was enthroned in the National Church, seemed to their innocence a favourable opportunity for securing, not supremacy, at which they did not aim, but security for toleration within the Church whose faithful servants they were. Accordingly as King James moved southwards on his progress through his new realm, he was met by what is known as "The Millenary Petition," so named because it professed to express the desires of a thousand clergy of the Established Church of England. What the petition asked for was that while the more ritualistic sections of the Church were left to follow their taste within the limits of the Prayer-Book, the Puritan section should be free to discard what seemed to them superstitious rites and ceremonies. To-day the points at issue seem to us comparatively small matters, which might have been conceded without any violation of principle, and which, if conceded, would have gone far to preserve the unity of the Church; but small as they were, the way in which they were handled would determine much—the far greater question of whether or not the new king was prepared to tolerate Puritanism within the Church of England.

Superficial and outward considerations might have led the Puritan clergy to expect that King James would be on their side. He himself was naturally a theologian—of sorts. He had been brought up on the Bible, had translated parts of the Psalter, and (not perhaps the best evidence of his sanity on Biblical questions) had written a paraphrase of the Apocalypse. Moreover, in addressing the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1590, he had thrown contempt upon the ritual of the Church of England in no uncertain terms. "As for our neighbour kirk in England," he had said, "it is an ill-mumbled Mass in English, wanting but the liftings."

But the Puritans had not realised the other and dominant side of their new king's nature—that mulish conviction of the Divine Right of Kings, and especially of Kings of the Stuart race, which was destined to produce such fatal results in himself, his son, and his grandson and namesake. Because of that right, coupled, of course, with his conviction of his own superior wisdom, James considered himself as the final authority on all questions, whether sacred or profane; and his self-conceit had been sorely wounded by the rugged independence of his Scottish subjects, and the stubborn refusal of his Scottish Presbyterian clergy to yield to the Divine will as revealed through the new Solomon. The trained theologians of Presbytery had mocked the amateur disquisitions of royalty, and Andrew Melvil, a theologian of a very different calibre from James, had plucked the outraged king by his sacred sleeve, and told him that he was nothing but "God's silly vassal." Such wounds go deep and rankle and fester in small and unhealthy natures, such as that of James, and the Puritan cause in England was already damned in the king's mind, or ever it was pleaded, by its associations, fancied or otherwise, with the Presbyterianism which had humbled him in Scotland. The Hampton Court Conference was really called, not to consider the Millenary Petition, but to give James an opportunity of venting on the English Puritans the spite which it had not been safe for him to vent on the Scottish Presbyterians.

So far as regarded the modest requests of the Millenary Petition, the proceedings of the conference were a mere farce, and not a creditable one. The very mention of the words "Synod" and "Presbytery" made James's spite blaze up. He poured out his malice with all the volubility of a Billingsgate fish-fag. "If you aim at a Scottish Presbytery," he shouted, "it agreeth as well with a monarchy as God and the Devil. Then Jack and Tom and Will and Dick shall meet, and at their pleasures censure me and my council and all our proceedings. . . . Stay, I pray you, Dr. Reynolds (The Puritan spokesman), for one seven years, before you

demand that from me, and then if you find me pursy and fat, and my windpipes stuffed, I will perhaps hearken to you; for let that government once be up, I am sure I shall be kept in breath; then shall we all of us have work enough. . . . Until you find that I grow lazy, let that alone."

Working up his passion by the memory of past humiliations he went on. "How they used the poor lady, my mother, is not unknown, and how they dealt with me in my minority. I thus apply it. . . . No Bishop, no King" . . . Then turning to Reynolds, who stood aghast and silent at such an exhibition, as he well might: "Well, Doctor, have you anything more to say?" "No more, if it please your Majesty." "Then, if this be all your party hath to say, I will make them conform themselves, or else I will harry them out of the land."

On such petty personal grounds, and with such utter lack either of royal dignity, of statesmanlike wisdom, or even of common decency, did "the wisest fool in Christendom" make the most stupid and perverse decision that even a Stuart ever made. It was destined to prove the most fatal, not only to him and his line, but to the very Church of which a section for the moment unwisely gloried in it. One of the Bishops present went so far in servility as to declare that His Majesty spoke by the inspiration of the Spirit of God! God has, we know, spoken "in divers manners;" but this! Gardiner's estimate comes nearer to the truth. "In two minutes he had sealed his own fate and that of England for ever."

God, however, though He does not inspire such silly stupidity as that of King James, has, fortunately for us, His own ways of bringing good out of evil, and of making the wrath of man to praise Him. A great blessing, entirely unforeseen by either party to this most ill-inspired of conferences, was destined to arise out of it. It came, strange to say, out of a suggestion made by the leader of the despised and rejected Puritan party. "It is creditable," says Mr. Pollard, "to the scholarship, and perhaps also to the fore-

sight, of the Puritan party, that at the Conference at Hampton Court . . . the demand for a new translation, which would command the assent of the whole Church, came from their spokesman, Dr. John Reynolds, President of Corpus Christi College, Oxford."

The reference to the origin of the translation, in the Translators' Preface to the Authorised Version, though most ungraciously worded, and conceived in a most partisan spirit, is quite conclusive as to the fact. "For the very Historicall trueth is, that vpon the importunate petitions of the Puritanes, at his Maiesties comming to this Crowne, the Conference at Hampton Court hauing bene appointed for hearing these complaints: when by force of reason they were put off from all other grounds, they had recourse at the last to this shift, that they could not with good conscience subscribe to the Communion book since it maintained the Bible as it was there translated, which was as they said, a most corrupted translation. And although this was iudged to be but a very poore and emptie shift; yet euen hereupon did his Maiestie beginne to bethinke himselfe of the good that might ensue by a new translation, and presently after gaue order for this Translation which is presented vnto thee. Thus much to satisfie our scrupulous Brethren." What the "force of reason" was, by which the Puritans were put to the "poore and emptie shift" of suggesting a revised version, we have just seen; perhaps a more accurate description of it would be "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."

What actually happened, however, was much more interesting than this account would lead us to suppose, and certainly more amusing. We have a contemporary account of the Conference from the pen of William Barlow, Dean of Chester. "It is evident from every page in the narrative," says Mr. Pollard, "that the writer of it, William Barlow, had no love for the Puritans, and that his report is highly prejudiced." However, even though Dean Barlow's eyes were jaundiced, at least they actually saw what happened on that

momentous 16th day of January, 1604, one of the cardinal days of our history, if we had the wit to recognise it—the day that sowed the seed of things so diverse as the Civil War, the Puritan Ascendancy, the Revolution of 1688, and the Authorised Version. So let us hear the Dean, describing events, with the resolve in his own mind, like another stout Church of England man, "not to let the Whig dogs get the best of it."

"After that, he moued his Maiestie, that there might bee a newe *translation* of the *Bible*, because, those which were allowed in the raignes of *Henrie* the eight and *Edward* the sixt, were corrupt and not aunswerable to the truth of the Originall. . . . To which motion, there was, at the present, no gainsaying, the obiections being triuall and old, and alreadie, in print, often aunswered; onely, my Lord of London (Bishop Bancroft, obviously a true successor of Cuthbert Tunstall) well added, that if euery mans humour should be followed, there would be no ende of translating."

Bishop Bancroft, however, had put in his jibe at the wrong point. The idea had tickled the imagination of the British Solomon, who already saw himself clothed in fancy with the ancient glories of Ptolemy Philadelphus, and presiding over the labours of another and holier Seventy. Perhaps in prophetic vision he already foresaw the splendours of the Epistle Dedicatorie of 1611, and heard those noble words, "the appearance of your Maiestie, as of the Sunne in his strength." Bishop Bancroft was snubbed, and subsided—"Whereupon his Highnesse wished that some especiall paines should be taken in that behalfe for one vniforme translation (professing that hee could neuer yet see a Bible well translated in English; but the worst of all, his Maiestie thought the Geneua to bee); and this to bee done by the best learned in both the Vniversities, after them to be reuiewed by the Bishops and the chief learned of the Church; from them to be presented to the Priuie Councell; and lastly to bee ratified by his *Royall authoritie;* and so this whole Church to be bound vnto it, and none other." Dean Barlow

allows the cloven hoof to peep out in his choice of the Bibles which were alleged to have the corrupt renderings, for all which were quoted that day were found in the Bishops' Bible, as well as in the versions published in the reigns of Henry and Edward; but it is to the credit of King James that he at once put forward a plan of translation very greatly superior to that which the wisdom of the Church had been able to suggest for the Bishops' Bible.

But James was now fairly in the saddle of his particular hobby-horse of Divine right, and his next venture into Biblical criticism was to witness a sad fall from grace. "Marry, withall," goes on the Dean, "hee gaue this caueat (vpon a word cast out by my Lord of London) that no marginall notes should be added, hauing found in them which are annexed to the Geneua translation (*which he sawe in a Bible giuen him by an English lady*)" [Oh James, James!] "some notes very partiall, vntrue, seditious, and sauouring too much of daungerous and trayterous conceites. As for example, Exod. 1. 19, where the marginal note alloweth *disobedience to kings*. And 2 Chron. xv. 16, the note taxeth *Asa* for deposing his mother *onely*, and *not killing her*."

James, not now alone, but all through his career, showed himself to be a gifted and talented liar, though unfortunately lacking in that good memory which is proverbially necessary to a liar; but even he surely never accomplished a huger feat of mendacity than when he stood up before the Hampton Conference, and spoke of having seen the Geneva translation "in a Bible giuen him by an English lady!" The man had been brought up on the Geneva Bible; the first Bible printed in his realm was the Bassandyne Bible, an edition of the Geneva version, dedicated "To the Richt Excellent Richt heich and Mychtie Prince James the Sixt King of Scottis"; the number of sermons he had listened to upon texts drawn from its chapters must have been past counting; nay he had used it for his own royal prelections; and he says "I saw it in a Bible giuen me by an English lady!" Economy of the truth could scarcely go further. One is grateful to

Dean Barlow for this glimpse of a king and his conscience; but if Andrew Melvil had been present, instead of courtly Bishop Bancroft or respectful Dr. Reynolds, possibly he would have found some other title even more adequate than "God's silly vassal" wherewith to qualify the author of that tremendous fib.

Returning from this astonishing digression into Biblical criticism and fiction, James wound up the business with some sound advice, and a gentle reminder, from the Olympian heights of royal dignity (on which he did not always sit), of the fact that the time of a King by Divine Right had been unnecessarily taken up by such trifles as those upon which he had been instructing his foolish subjects that day. "And so," says the Dean, "concludeth the point as all the rest with a grave and iudicious aduise. First, that errours in matters of faith might bee rectified and amended. Secondly, that matters indifferent might rather be interrupted and a glosse added; alleaging from *Bartolus de Regno* that as better a King with some weaknesse, then still a chaunge; so rather, a Church with some faultes, then an Innouation. And surely, sayth his Maiestie, if these bee the greatest matters you be griued with, I neede not haue beene troubled with such importunities and complaintes, as haue beene made vnto me; some other more priuate course might haue bene taken for your satisfaction, and withall looking vppon the Lords, he shooke his head smiling."

Was there ever a more ironic commentary upon the limitations of human understanding than is afforded by a comparison of that Olympian nod of the Stuart Zeus, dismissing the trifles which his subjects had brought for his consideration, with the actual issues of them to himself, his descendants, and his nation?—Civil War, the loss of Crowns and life—and, out of the most trifling of them all, the gift of the pure Fountain of the Water of Life from a careless hand to a thirsty people.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

The Building of the Authorised Version; Financial Straits of Its Royal Patron

KING JAMES was highly satisfied with the part which he had played in the Conference where he was supposed to sit as an impartial judge between conflicting views. Having, instead of this, declared himself a rabid partisan, he professed himself proud of the fact. "I have kept a revel with the Puritans," he wrote to a friend in Scotland, "and have peppered them soundly," which is, no doubt, a perfectly accurate description of what he did do, but scarcely what he ought to have done. For the moment it looked as if the seed of the New Translation had fallen upon barren soil. Bishop Bancroft, though he was so delighted by the King's outburst of Billingsgate against the Puritans as to give thanks to heaven upon his knees for "the singular mercy of such a king as, since Christ, the like hath not been seen" (which was probably quite true), was manifestly hostile to the proposition; and indeed, though Convocation met shortly after the Conference, nothing whatever was said upon the subject, and it looked as though the matter had been dropped.

But James was bent upon having his own way in this, as in other things. The proposal had tickled his fancy, and as he thought it over he must have felt how admirably his position, as the Spring and Mover of a great scheme involving all the resources of the scholarship of the time in the production of a work of learning which should surpass all that had gone before it, would minister to that self-conceit which

was the outstanding feature of his character. This was to be his own scheme, and all the glory of it would be his; he was not going to allow it to perish for lack of support, as the clergy seemed inclined to do. Moreover, as Bancroft had been the voice of ecclesiastical sluggishness and disinclination to be troubled in the matter, he should be made the instrument, willing or unwilling, for the carrying out of the plan.

The See of Canterbury being vacant at the moment, it was quite in order that the Bishop of London should be employed upon the business, and his employment on a task which he disliked was quite in accordance with the impish humour which James showed on occasion. The Dean of Westminster, and the Regius Professors of Hebrew at Oxford and Cambridge were communicated with by the King at once, and asked to advise as to suitable scholars for the work; and by June 30, Bishop Bancroft was able to write to one of the selected: "His Majesty being made acquainted with the choice of all them to be employed in the translating of the Bible, in such sort as Mr. Lively can inform you, doth greatly approve of the said choice. And for as much as his Highness is very anxious that the same so religious a work should admit of no delay, he has commanded me to signify unto you in his name that his pleasure is, you should with all possible speed meet together in your University and begin the same."

Here, however, there loomed upon the horizon the shadow of a difficulty which was destined to prove a sore hindrance to the great work. Here was a most desirable piece of work; but, like all such things, it was going to cost money —quite a good deal of money when you came to look into things, and to see how many learned men would need to be supported, and get at least their necessary daily bread while they were engaged on their sacred task. Who was to provide the money? Well, it was the King's plan; what about the King financing his own scheme? Unfortunately King James, with the best will, no doubt, in the world, was all

his life through in a state of chronic impecuniosity. Readers of *The Fortunes of Nigel* will remember to what sad straits his anointed Majesty was often reduced, only to be delivered from them by the help of "Jingling Geordie" Heriot, whose percentages on his deliverances of royalty built the most picturesque building in Edinburgh. "Ye ken that my very household servitors, and the officers of my mouth, are sax months in arrear! . . . Our Exchequer is as dry as Dean Giles's discourses on the penitentiary psalms—*Ex nihilo nihil fit*—It's ill taking the breeks aff a wild Highlandman—they that come to me for siller, should tell me how to come by it." Such were the vulgar difficulties which hindered the accomplishment of His Majesty's pet project. A happy thought, however, came to him. The new Bible would be the property of the Church, though the glory of it would be the King's; why should not the Church pay for it? Not, of course, in cash down, but in the way of comfortable preferments, as such fell in. Besides, if poor old Romish Bishop Nix could subscribe £6 13s. 4d. towards the purchase of Tyndale's Bibles to burn, what might not be expected from an enlightened episcopate in the way of voluntary contributions towards so sacred a work as the translation of a new Bible, if the matter were delicately put to them on behalf of their pious King? Accordingly, on July 31, 1604, poor Bishop Bancroft finds himself under the necessity of circulating among the Bishops the following letter from the King.

"Right trusty and well beloved, we greet you well. Whereas we have appointed certain learned men, to the number of four and fifty, for the translating of the Bible, and that in this number, divers of them have either no ecclesiastical preferment at all, or else so very small, as the same is far unmeet for men of their deserts, and yet we of ourself in any convenient time cannot well remedy it (Pity a poor impecunious King!), therefore we do hereby require you, that presently you write in our name as well to the archbishop of York as to the rest of the bishops of the

province of Cant. signifying unto them, that we do will and straitly charge every one of them, as also the other bishops of the province of York, as they tender our good favour towards them, that (all excuses set apart) when any prebend or parsonage, being rated in our book of taxations, the prebend to twenty pound at the least and the parsonage to the like sum and upwards, shall next upon any occasion happen to be void, and to be either of their patronage and gift, or the like parsonage so void to be of the patronage and gift of any person whatsoever, they do make stay thereof, and admit none unto it, until certifying vs of the avoidance of it, and of the name of the patron (if it be not of their own gift) we may commend for the same some such of the learned men, as we shall think fit to be preferred unto it: not doubting of the bishops' readiness to satisfy us herein, or that any of the laity, when we shall in time move them to so good and religious an act, will be unwilling to give us the like due contentment and satisfaction; we ourselves having taken the same order for such prebends and benefices as shall be void in our gift.

What we write to you of others, you must apply it to yourself, as also not forget to move the said archbishop and all the bishops, with their deans and chapters of both provinces, as touching the other point to be imparted otherwise by you unto them." So having provided his translators with this quite satisfactory imaginary reversion of dead men's shoes, His Majesty turns in the remainder of his letter to suggest that if any learned men in any diocese have any suggestions to make for the improvement of the new translation they should be duly forwarded to the proper quarters. But in his royal thoughtfulness for his learned but far from wealthy servants, he next strives to make some more immediate provision for their current needs, until such time as the dead men's shoes should be forthcoming. This is "the other point to be imparted otherwise," mentioned in the preceding letter; and the provision suggested is—a voluntary levy upon the bishops and chapters of the kingdom!

Bishop Bancroft has to forward this suggestion along with the other, and duly does so, as follows—with such feelings as we, remembering his grumble at the Conference, may imagine.

"Salutem in Christo. My very good lord, as touching that clause in his majesty's letter, which is referred to my relation, this it is: there are many, as your lordship perceiveth, who are to be employed in this translating of the Bible, and sundry of them must of necessity have their charges borne, which his majesty was very ready of his most princely disposition to have borne: but some of my lords, as things now go, did hold it inconvenient, whereupon it was left to me, to move all my brethren, the bishops, and likewise every several dean and chapter, to contribute toward this work. Accordingly therefore to my duty, I heartily pray your lordship not only to think yourself what is meet for you to give for this purpose, but likewise to acquaint your dean and chapter not only with the said clause of his majesty's letter, but likewise with the meaning of it, that they may agree upon such a sum, as they mean to contribute.

I do not think that a thousand marks will finish the work, to be employed as is aforesaid, whereof your lordship, with your dean and chapter, having due consideration, I must request you in his majesty's name according to his good pleasure in that behalf, that as soon as possibly you can, you send me word what shall be expected from you and your said dean and chapter; for I am to acquaint his majesty with every man's liberality towards this most godly work. And thus not doubting of your especiall care for the accomplishing of the premises, and desiring your lordship to note the date to me of your receipt of this letter, I commend your lordship unto the tuition of the Almighty God. From Fulham, this 31st of July, MDCIV."

So now, James, having made all due provision for the men who were to work for God's glory (to say nothing of his own), could wait the response to his generous proposal. Alas for the meanness and parsimony of human nature.

"The response to the first of these circulars," says Mr. Pollard, "seems to have been very slight; that to the second *nil!*" King James, who was himself a Scripture scholar, might have remembered a proverb of the book which he wished to translate, "Surely in vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird."

A deadlock had thus apparently been reached, and the work appears to have been hung up for nearly three years, during which time the Mr. Lively already mentioned, who was Professor of Hebrew at Cambridge, died (May 1605). His death was a great loss to the work. Finally, some sort of an arrangement seems to have been come to by which the revisers were provided for by sundry colleges at Oxford and Cambridge, though, but for one piece of evidence, we should be left to infer that these colleges were provided with means for the nurture of the King's translators as mysteriously as Elijah was nurtured by the ravens. The explanatory statement referred to is made in William Ball's *Briefe treatise concerning the Regulating of Printing*, 1651, and is to the effect that Robert Barker, the printer of the Authorised Bible, "paid for the amended or corrected Translation of the Bible £3,500: by reason whereof the translated copy did of right belong to him and his assignes." Dividing this sum up among the fifty-four translators whom James appointed, we arrive at the sum of £64 16s. 3d. for the sustenance of each man; but as only forty-seven names appear on the lists, the sum may have been somewhat larger for each, and may have reached the magnificent amount of £74 9s. 4d.

On the other hand, twelve of the company had to do extra duty as revisers of the completed work of themselves and their brethren, and if we allow them double remuneration, as having done double work, then the rest of the translators would only receive something like £59 for their services. As the translators themselves say in their preface that their work "hath cost the workmen, as light as it seemeth, the paines of twise seven times seventy-two dayes and more,"

we find that they were at work for two years and nine months; and this makes their remuneration work out curiously near to the prebend of "£20 at the least," which was first suggested in the king's letter. All this, of course, is somewhat a matter of guessing from the sum stated to have been paid by Barker; but it looks as if, in the absence of funds either from the king or the Church, the business was finally put where it ought to have been put at the beginning, on an ordinary business footing, and the publisher paid the workers, retaining his rights over the work. Even so, we may rest assured that the translators did not grow fat on the proceeds of their labours.

It is fitting that the names of the forty-seven men whom we know to have been concerned in this great work should be chronicled with honour. The work was divided as follows: The *Pentateuch*, with Joshua—2 Kings inclusive, Lancelot Andrewes, Bishop of Chester from 1605; John Overall, Bishop of Coventry, 1614; Dr. Saravia, Prebendary of Worcester and Westminster, 1601; Dr. Clark, Fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge; Dr. John Layfield, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and Rector of St. Clement Danes, London (Dr. Johnson's Church); Dr. Robert Tighe, Vicar of All Hallows, Barking, and Archdeacon of Middlesex; Dr. Francis Burley, one of the first Fellows of Chelsea College; Mr. Geoffrey King, Regius Professor of Hebrew, Cambridge (1607–8); Mr. Richard Tomson, of Clare Hall, Cambridge; Mr. William Bedwell, Rector of St. Ethelburga's, Bishopsgate Street.

The remaining *Historical Books* with *Job*, *Psalms*, *Proverbs*, *Canticles*, and *Ecclesiastes*: Mr. Edward Lively, Regius Professor of Hebrew at Cambridge, died 1605; Dr. John Richardson, Master of Peterhouse, 1609–1615, and of Trinity thereafter; Dr. Laurence Chaderton, Master of Emmanuel College, 1584–1622 (One of the Puritan representatives at the Hampton Court Conference); Mr. Francis Dillingham, Incumbent of Wilden, Beds; Mr. Thomas Harrison, Hebraist, Vice-Master of Trinity, Cambridge; Mr. Roger Andrewes,

(brother of Lancelot), Master of Jesus, Cambridge; Mr. Robert Spalding, Regius Professor of Hebrew, Cambridge, after Mr. Lively (1605–7); Mr. Andrew Byng, Regius Professor of Hebrew, in succession to King (1608).

The Four Greater Prophets, with the *Lamentations*, and the *Twelve Minor Prophets:* Dr. John Harding, Regius Professor of Hebrew, and President of Magdalen, Oxford; Dr. John Reynolds, President of Corpus Christi, Oxford (the Puritan spokesman at the Hampton Court Conference); Dr. Thomas Holland, Rector of Exeter College, Oxford; Dr. Richard Kilbye, Regius Professor of Hebrew, Oxford, 1610–21; Miles Smith, one of the final revisers, and writer of the Preface, Bishop of Gloucester, 1612; Mr. Richard Brett, Fellow of Lincoln, Rector of Quainton, Bucks; Mr. Richard Fairclough, Fellow of New College, and Rector of Bucknell, Oxford. The *Apocrypha:* Dr. John Duport, Prebendary of Ely, 1609; Dr. William Branthwait, Master of Gonville and Caius, 1607; Dr. Jeremiah Radcliffe, Fellow of Trinity, Cambridge; Mr. Samuel Ward, Master of Sidney Sussex, 1610, King's Chaplain, 1611; Mr. Andrew Downes, Regius Professor of Greek (1585–1624); Mr. John Boys, Dean of Canterbury, 1619; Mr. Ward, Fellow of King's.

The *Four Gospels*, the *Acts*, the *Apocalypse:* Dr. Thomas Ravis, Bishop of Gloucester, 1605, Bishop of London, 1607, died, 1609; Dr. George Abbot, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1611; Dr. Richard Edes, Dean of Worcester, Chaplain to King James, died November 1604, and was succeeded in the work by James Montague, afterwards Bishop of Bath and Wells. Edes had been destined for one of the final revisers; Dr. Giles Thompson or Tomson, Bishop of Gloucester, 1611, died, 1612; Sir Henry Savile, Warden of Merton, Provost of Eton, knighted, 1604; Dr. John Perin, Regius Professor of Greek, 1597–1615; Dr. Ravens—possibly an error for L. Hutten, Canon of Christ Church; Mr. John Harmer, Regius Professor of Greek, 1585, Headmaster of Winchester, Warden of St. Mary's College. Some

HUGH LATIMER PREACHING AT PAUL'S CROSS

From a painting by Sir George Hayter.

The boldest and most lovable of Reformation Preachers in the famous open-air pulpit under the shadow of Old St. Paul's.

lists substitute the name of Dr. J. Aglionby, Principal of St. Edmund Hall, for that of Dr. Edes.

The *Epistles* of *St. Paul* and the *Canonical Epistles:* Dr. William Barlow, Dean of Chester (our old friend the reporter of the Conference), Bishop of Rochester, 1605, died, 1613; Dr. Ralph Hutchinson, President of St. John's College, Oxford; Dr. John Spenser, President of Corpus Christi, Oxford, 1607. Mr. Roger Fenton, Vicar of Chigwell, Prebendary of St. Paul's; Mr. Michael Rabbett, Rector of St. Vedast Foster; Mr. Thomas Sanderson, Archdeacon of Rochester, 1606; Mr. William Dakins, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, Professor of Divinity, Gresham College, London, 1604, died 1607.

A long list; but a list of men whose names deserve to be kept in everlasting remembrance, as those who have accomplished one of the greatest and most fruitful pieces of work ever given to men to do in this world. Not the least honourable thing about it is that in spite of the heat of the controversy between the two sections of the Church of England, the list is a thoroughly representative one, giving adequate representation to the Puritans as well as to their opponents. "The choice of the revisers seems to have been determined solely by their fitness, and both parties in the Church were represented by some of their best men." The reward of this candour and fair-mindedness was reaped in the astonishingly high quality of the work, and in the fact that, though the new version, like others, took a good while to come to its own, it finally established itself as acceptable to all shades of opinion, and became the unquestioned Bible of Protestant Britain, and of English-speaking Protestants throughout the world.

And now, how was the work done? We have in full the rules which were laid down to guide the various companies in their task. They are as follows:

1. The ordinary Bible read in the Church, commonly called the *Bishops' Bible*, to be followed, and as little altered as the Truth of the original will permit.

2. The Names of the Prophets, and the Holy Writers, with the other Names of the Text, to be retained, as nigh as may be, accordingly as they were vulgarly used.

3. The old Ecclesiastical Words to be kept, *viz.* the Word *Church* not to be translated *Congregation*, &c.

4. When a Word hath divers Significations, that to be kept which hath been most commonly used by the most of the Ancient Fathers, being agreeable to the Propriety of the Place, and the Analogy of the Faith.

5. The Division of the Chapters to be altered, either not at all, or as little as may be, if Necessity so require.

6. No Marginal Notes at all to be affixed, but only for the Explanation of the *Hebrew* or *Greek* Words, which cannot, without some circumlocution, so briefly and fitly be expressed in the Text.

7. Such Quotations of Places to be marginally set down as shall serve for the fit Reference of one Scripture to another.

8. Every particular Man of each Company, to take the same Chapter, or Chapters, and having translated or amended them severally by himself, where he thinketh good, all to meet together, confer what they have done, and agree for their Parts what shall stand.

9. As any one Company hath dispatched any one Book in this Manner they shall send it to the rest, to be consider'd of seriously and judiciously, for His Majesty is very careful to this point.

10. If any Company, upon the Review of the Book so sent, doubt or differ upon any Place, to send them Word thereof; note the Place, and withal send the Reasons, to which if they consent not, the Difference to be compounded at the General Meeting, which is to be of the chief Persons of each Company at the end of the Work.

11. When any Place of special Obscurity is doubted of, Letters to be directed, by Authority, to send to any Learned Man in the Land, for his Judgement of such a Place.

12. Letters to be sent from every Bishop to the rest of his Clergy, admonishing them of this Translation in hand; and

to move and charge as many as being skilful in the Tongues ; and having taken Pains in that kind, to send his particular Observations to the Company, either at *Westminster*, *Cambridge* or *Oxford*.

13. The Directors in each Company to be the Deans of Westminster and Chester for that Place ; and the King's Professors in the *Hebrew* or *Greek* in either University.

14. These translations to be used when they agree better with the Text than the Bishops' Bible : *Tindoll's*, *Matthews*, *Coverdale's*, *Whitchurch's*, *Geneva*.

15. Besides the said Directors before mentioned, three or four of the most Ancient and Grave Divines, in either of the Universities, not employed in Translating, to be assigned by the Vice-Chancellor, upon Conference with the rest of the Heads, to be Overseers of the Translations as well *Hebrew* as *Greek*, for the better Observation of the 4th Rule above specified.

Two things will at once be noticed with regard to these rules ; *First*, that here is an admirable and highly satisfactory set of rules. Whoever planned the work did it with thoroughness and foresight, and the rule which the King is mentioned as specially insisting upon is a thoroughly common-sense one. King James has been criticised ; let him have credit where credit is due. *Second*, that here we are dealing with modern English. We shall see how much the translators found it possible (to our great advantage) to carry over from the work of their predecessors, so that even Wycliffe, with Tyndale, Coverdale, and the rest of the Henrician and Elizabethan translators, all have their share, as they deserved to have, in the finished work ; but the fact is manifest that we have passed into modern English, and that the book which will be produced under rules so expressed will be a book which will embody Biblical truth in language which will remain intelligible to practically all generations of English-speaking folk. When these rules were first put into practice, say in 1607, Shakespeare was at the zenith of his powers, and *Macbeth* and *Lear* had been played at Court the year before ;

that other mighty master of our speech, John Milton, was born the year after the companies started their work; and Shakespeare's mightiest masterpiece and farewell, *The Tempest*, was played in the very year in which the new version was published. King James's revisers were fortunate in the time at which the work was committed to their hands.

Fortunately there has been preserved an almost contemporary account of the way in which the work of one at least of the translators was done. Dr. John Boys was one of the second Cambridge group, who had in hand the translation of the Apocrypha; and in after years he came to be Dean of Canterbury. At the time when we see him at work, he was holding the living of Boxworth, "which," says Mr. Pollard, "it is to be feared, he rather neglected during his work as a translator." At all events, Boxworth did not see a great deal of him, save that he spent his week-ends there. Dr. Anthony Walker, who writes his life, gives us the following details: "When it pleased God to move King James to that excellent work, the translation of the Bible; when the translators were to be chosen for Cambridge, he (Dr. Boys) was sent for thither by those therein employed, & was chosen one; some university men thereat repining (it may be not more able, yet more ambitious to have born share in that service) disdaining that it should be thought they needed any help from the country.—Forgetting that Tully was the same man at Tusculanum as he was at Rome. Sure I am, that part of the Apocrypha was alotted to him (for he hath shewed me the very copy he translated by), but to my grief I know not which part.

All the time he was about his own part, his commons were given him at St. John's; where he abode all the week, till Saturday night; & then went home to discharge his cure: returning thence on Monday morning. When he had finished his own part, at the earnest request of him to whom it was assigned, he undertook a second; and then he was in commons in another college: but I forbear to name both the person and the house.

Four years were spent in this first service; at the end whereof the whole work being finished, & three copies of the whole Bible sent from Cambridge, Oxford & Westminster, to London; a new choice was to be made of six in all, two out of every company, to review the whole work; & extract one (copy) out of all three, to be committed to the presse.

For the dispatch of which business Mr. Downes & Mr. Bois were sent for up to London—Where meeting (though Mr. Downes would not go till he was either fetcht or threatened with a pursivant) their four fellow labourers, they went dayly to Stationers Hall, & in three quarters of a year, finished their task. All which time they had from the Company of Stationers xxxs (each) per week, duly paid them: tho' they had nothing before but the self-rewarding, ingenious industry. While they were employed in this businesse, he & he only, took notes of their proceedings: which notes he kept to his dying day."

Dr. Walker tells us just enough to make us wish for more. What became of those notes which the industrious Mr. Boys, " & he only," took of the proceedings of his revisal committee? After he kept them to his dying day, it does seem a pity that he did not make a better disposition of them than he seems to have done, and so add to the debt which we owe to him and his biographer for this glimpse into the past. Grumbles and dissatisfactions there evidently were, even in a matter so sacred as the translating of the Bible, and the ire of the " University men " at the selection of a mere country parson is thoroughly characteristic.

But the chief mystery attaches to the reprehensible conduct of Mr. Downes. How did it come about that the learned man was so stubborn that he would not go up to London " till he was either fetcht or threatned with a pursivant? " Had he been so badly fed by the Cambridge College which had the keeping of him that he was resolved not to risk starvation in London? Probably we shall never know; we are left with the picture of the worthy man travelling sullenly

up to London under the care of a Sheriff's officer, and indignantly drawing his thirty shillings a week till such time as he could go back to his Regius Professorship of Greek at Cambridge, and his proper work there—a man who had no ambition to be one of the immortals, and took no stock in "the self-rewarding, ingenious industry!"

Dr. Walker makes one mistake in his account of the revision. He seems to have imagined that Oxford, Cambridge and Westminster each sent only two revisers to the revising board at London; but there were two companies of translators at each place, and each company sent two revisers, so that the total revising board numbered twelve and not six. Apparently the time between 1604, when the scheme was started, and 1611 was spent more or less thus: 1604–6, inclusive, was the period when the work was hanging fire, though the translators were already named, through the unfortunate pecuniary difficulties already alluded to; doubtless, however, the individual translators were preparing themselves by private research during this time. The sessions of the six companies began in 1607, and lasted till 1609. Nine months of 1610 were devoted to the work of the twelve revisers at Stationers' Hall. The remaining months of 1610 must have been shared between the final revision, which was accomplished by Bishop Bilson of Winchester, and Dr. Miles Smith, afterwards Bishop of Gloucester, and the work of printing the copy as finally approved. The printing was continued in 1611, in which year the result of all this labour was published.

Our account of the actual work of translation may most fittingly be closed with the note from Selden's *Table Talk* as to the manner in which the translators did their work, which, though somewhat vague and not absolutely accurate as to details, seems to represent pretty fairly the general method of work. "The English Translation of the Bible," he says, "is the best Translation in the World, and renders the Sense of the Original best, taking in for the English Translation the Bishops' Bible as well as King James's.

The Translation in King James's time took an excellent way. That part of the Bible was given to him who was most excellent in such a tongue (as the Apocrypha to Andrew Downes) and then they met together, and one read the Translation, the rest holding in their hands some Bible, either of the learned Tongues, or French, Spanish, Italian, &c. : if they found any fault they spoke, if not he read on." Selden's conception is obviously not perfectly accurate—e.g. the Apocrypha was not entrusted solely to the indignant Andrew Downes, but to the whole of the second Cambridge Company, consisting of seven men ; the procedure followed by each company, however, was no doubt such as he depicts, probably from information supplied to him by someone who was actually employed in the work.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

The Authorised Version. i. Its External Features

ONE of the pathetic things about such great undertakings as the production of the Authorised Version is that so often the men who were responsible for the initiation of the work do not live to see its completion. Like Moses, they only get a Pisgah-sight of the goodly land into which they are not permitted to enter. Such was very notably the case with regard to the Bible of 1611 and the man who had given the first impulse to its production. Dr. John Reynolds, whose suggestion at the Hampton Court Conference set in motion the whole elaborate machinery which seven years later produced the Book that more than any other represents the spiritual life of our nation, was a Puritan, but a Puritan of such a type as those who misrepresent and caricature Puritanism choose deliberately to ignore,—learned and cultured in a high degree, and withal of a singularly beautiful and lovable nature. Thomas Fuller says of him that it was impossible to tell of him which was greater, his learning or his goodness. One can imagine with what eagerness such a man watched the slow approach of the consummation which he wished; but he was destined never to witness it.

He was one of the Oxford company whose honour it was to translate the Greater Prophets; but before the task had progressed far he was stricken down by consumption, and gradually "faded out of life." Sick and feeble as he was, he persevered in his devotion to the work, and "for his great skill in the Originall Languages," the other members

of his company resorted to him "once a weeke, and in his Lodgings perfected their Notes." Latterly their meetings were held in his rooms at Corpus Christi, "and he, lying on his Pallet, assisted them, and in a manner in the very translation of the booke of life, was translated to a better life." The beginning of our Bible story gave us the beautiful and touching scene of the dying Bede, faltering out, almost with his last breath, the closing words of his translation of St. John's Gospel; it is fitting that its consummation should give us the equally noble scene of the dying Puritan scholar and his companions, differing, it may be, in many things, but united in the effort to give a pure Scripture to the land which they loved.

It was not until Reynolds had attained his rest four years that the result of his suggestion was given to the world. It appeared in 1611, from the press of Robert Barker, in the form of a stately folio, more magnificent than even the Bishops' Bible. Its title reads as follows: The HOLY BIBLE, Conteyning the Old Testament, AND THE NEW. Newly Translated out of the Originall tongues: & with the former Translations diligently compared and reuised, by his Maiesties speciall Comandement. Appointed to be read in Churches. Imprinted at London by Robert Barker, Printer to the Kings most Excellent Maiestie. Anno Dom. 1611.

The decoration of the title-page is a somewhat elaborate, but dignified, performance of a symbolical character, and is by no means lacking in merit, though it has not the lively historical interest which attaches to the Holbein title-page of the Great Bible. On the two sides of the printed title stand Moses and Aaron, the former with the Tables of Stone, and the wonder-working rod—the latter in full High-Priest's robes, his right hand laid upon the mystic breastplate, while his left holds a censer. The Four Evangelists sit at the four corners, and above the printed title St. Peter and St. Paul sit on either side of a medallion of the Lamb of God bearing the Cross, while around them are grouped martyrs

and warriors of the Church, and above in clouds is the Ineffable Name, with the Dove descending, and the Sun and Moon on either side. The medallion below the printed title bears the famous emblem of the Pelican feeding its young from its own breast. The design was the work of a Flemish artist, Cornelis Boel of Antwerp, who about this time was in favour at Court and was producing portraits of the Queen, Princess Elizabeth, and Prince Henry. It bears his signature, "C. Boel fecit in Richmont."

The New Testament has a curious wood-cut border of its own to the title, in which the Four Evangelists figure as before, and the page is crowned by a medallion of the Lamb, with the Divine Name above, between the Sun and Moon, and the Dove below, while beneath the printed title is the Lamb upon the Altar. On the right hand side of the title are miniatures of the Twelve Apostles, and on the left, quaintly enough, the tents of the Twelve Tribes of Israel, each with the armorial bearings of its particular tribe. The old mediæval prejudice that the Apostles were "gentlemen of coat-armour" has evidently left this last survival.

The curious thing about this version, which is known universally, and probably will always continue to be known, as "The Authorised Version," is that so far as the evidence goes, it was never authorised at all. "As is well known," says Mr. Pollard, "no authority has ever been discovered for the words 'Appointed to be read in Churches,' which appear on the title-page of all editions, nor for the phrase, the 'Authorized Version,' by which the Bible is usually known." At the time of the Revision of 1881, Lord Chancellor Selborne argued that it was incredible that the printer should ever have dared to use the words, "Appointed to be read in Churches," if they did not express an actual fact, and suggested that the authorisation may have been given by Order in Council, in which case no evidence of it could be expected to survive, as the Council books and registers from 1600 to 1613 were destroyed by a fire at Whitehall in 1618. But it is quite certain that if such an order had been issued

other evidence of its existence would have survived in addition to the Council books.

Indeed, the very wording of the title-page suggests the fact that no additional order was ever issued. The version of 1611 was produced to take the place of the Bishops' Bible. Now all editions of the Bishops' Bible from 1585 to 1602 bear on their title-page the words, "Authorised and Appointed to be read in Churches." Richard Barker, it will be observed, drops the stronger part of this phrase, and simply says "Appointed." If the version had been actually authorised by a special Order, he would never have used the weaker phrase when he was entitled to use the stronger. The fact is that King James originally meant, as we have already seen, that the book should be presented to the Privy Council, and finally ratified by royal authority; but for some reason, probably because it was held that this was unnecessary, as the new version was only the natural successor of the Bishops' Bible, the thing was not done, and our familiar "Authorised Version" has no right to its name.

Dr. Westcott's verdict may be accepted as final upon the point: "No evidence has yet been produced to shew that the version was ever publicly sanctioned by Convocation or by Parliament, or by the Privy Council, or by the king. It gained its currency partly, it may have been, by the weight of the king's name, partly by the personal authority of the prelates and scholars who had been engaged upon it, but still more by its own intrinsic superiority over its rivals." There we must be content to leave the matter. Our Bible won its present empire by the same tenure as that on which Alexander bequeathed his empire "to the strongest"; and it seems probable that it will continue to hold it on the same conditions against all rival versions.

Somewhat curiously also, we have no evidence as to the month in which it was issued in 1611; and this is due to the fact, that being not a new translation, but only a revised edition, it was not entered upon the Stationers' registers. So far as its material appearance is concerned, "in its original

form it is a handsome, well-printed book, set up apparently (as one would expect of such an undertaking) with newly-cast type yielding a clean and sharp impression, and on excellent paper." The preliminary matter, including "The Epistle Dedicatorie," and "The Translators to the Reader," with the Kalendars, and John Speed's "decoratively printed but useless Genealogies," was printed in Roman type; but for the body of the text the beautiful, but more troublesome, black letter type was reverted to, rather unfortunately, and the inserted words which are now printed in italics were then printed in Roman type, as were also the summaries at the heads of chapters, the subject headings at the top of each page, and the references to parallel passages in the margin. Alternative renderings in the margin are printed in italics. The black letter type certainly makes a beautiful page; but its adoption was a distinct retrogression, from the point of convenience in reading, and may partly account for the disfavour with which it was regarded in many quarters at its first appearance, as compared with the Geneva version.

The first edition is often known as the Great He Bible, while the second is called the Great She Bible. The reason for these curious nicknames is that in the passage Ruth III. 15, the first edition reads, quite correctly, "and he went into the citie," while the second, and nearly all subsequent editions read, "and she went into the citie." You will find that your own Bibles in this respect are "she" Bibles; but the true reading has been restored in the Revised Version, though a footnote is added stating that some ancient authorities read "She." Other curiosities of printing and of nomenclature as regards some of the early editions are the Wicked Bible of 1631, which left out the "not" in the Seventh Commandment, a printer's blunder for which Archbishop Laud in the following year fined the printers £300—a colossal fine for those days, and the Vinegar Bible of 1717, which prints *vinegar* for *vineyard* in the heading of the page containing Luke xx. However picturesque such

nicknames may appear, they are objectionable, and the less they are used the better.

One of the most remarkable features of the new version, and one which has strangely enough been perpetuated in all subsequent editions, in spite of the ridicule which it has brought upon its authors, is the notorious Epistle Dedicatorie, which immediately follows the title-page. Most of us, I daresay, possibly sometimes to relieve the tedium of an unusually dull sermon, have now and again turned to its sonorous paragraphs of shameless adulation, and wondered how men who were capable of the dignified and stately music of the actual text, or even of the plain sense of "The Translators to the Reader" should ever have descended to the grovelling flattery of the dedication. The very absurdity of it has perhaps helped to keep it alive, with its high-faluting figures of speech. "That bright *Occidentall Starre*, Queene ELIZABETH of most happy memory," may pass, especially when we remember how the sound of its conclusion inspired Oliver Cromwell in the utterance of his famous judgment "Queen Elizabeth of famous memory; we need not be ashamed to call her so!" but when it comes to "The appearance of your Maiestie, as of the *Sunne* in his strength!"

The only apology that can be made is that these were days when a Bishop of the Church, presumably sane, could describe King James as "such a king as, since Christ, the like had not been seen;" but why our Bibles should still be burdened with this ancient piece of flunkeyism, while the sensible Preface of the Translators has long since been discarded, is one of the things which nobody can understand. "The Lord of Heauen and earth blesse your Maiestie with many and happy dayes, that as his Heauenly hand hath enriched your Highnesse with many singular, and extraordinary Graces, so you may be the wonder of the world in this later age, for happinesse and true felicitie." Well, poor James needed it all badly enough; but it can do him no good now, and it might surely be dropped at last, when it has become merely a jest or an offence.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

The Authorised Version. ii. Characteristics and Merits

IT may very well be that the reason which has led to the dropping of the Translators' Preface from our Bibles while the fulsome Dedication is retained is the inordinate length of the former. It was the work of Miles Smith, one of the most famous Orientalists of the time, and one who was well qualified to speak for the translators, having been not only a member of one of the translating companies, but also one of the two distinguished scholars to whom the final revision of the work was entrusted. It is evident that his work was appreciated, as it well deserved to be; for the year after the publication of the new translation saw him preferred to the Bishopric of Gloucester. But it must be admitted that among all the many merits of his Preface, that of brevity is not to be numbered. The good man's discourse takes up no fewer than eleven mortal folio pages of small print, as against the less than two of larger type which suffice for the Dedication; and when you translate this into the smaller pages with which our degenerate days are more familiar, it amounts to anything from twenty-four to thirty pages of close printing, which is rather more than human nature is prepared to stand in any preface.

Nevertheless "The Translators to the Reader" is well worth reading even now, not only for the exhibition which it contains of wide and curious learning, and for the quaint simplicity which characterises some of the arguments

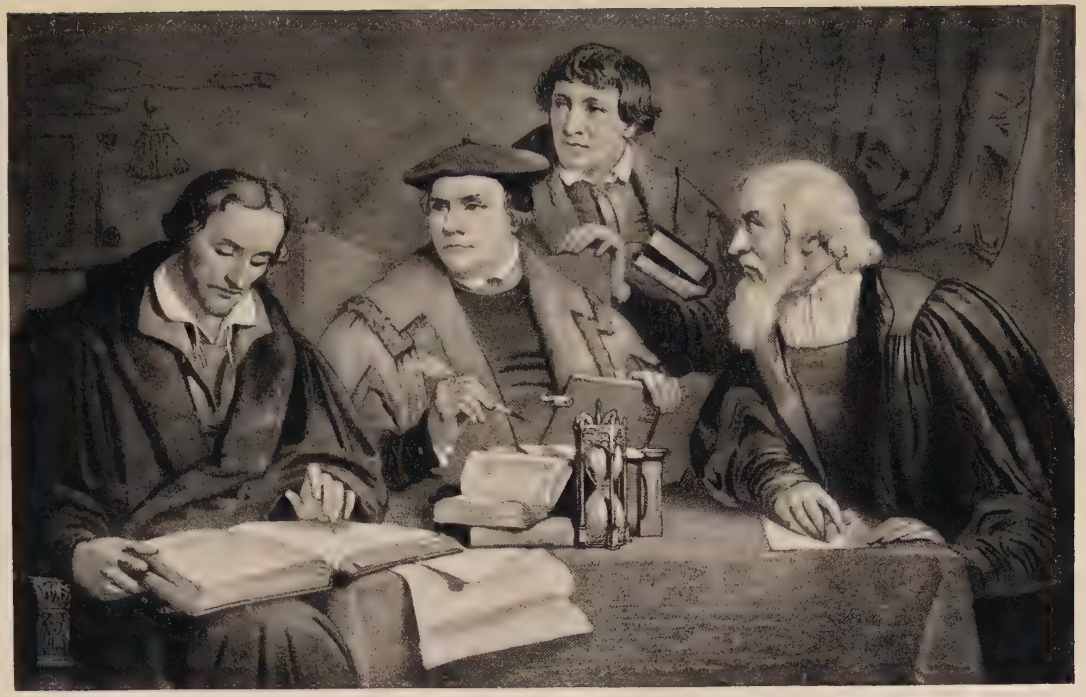
advanced, but also and especially for its admirable exposition of the principles which guided the translators in the work. Its demonstration of the fact that, as the highest persons have not escaped calumny, so King James has not missed being calumniated for this venture, yet has remained constant to his resolve, may seem to us a little superfluous, and its assemblage of historical proofs of the necessity of translations of Scripture a little pedantic, while its summary of the Hampton Court Conference is more terse (for once in a way) than candid; but its vindication of the right and duty of making and improving translations of Scripture still remains interesting and valuable, and its account of the object which the translators had before them, and how they attempted to attain it, is admirable both in spirit and substance.

"But it is high time to leave them," says Dr. Smith, "and to shew in brief what we proposed to ourselves, and what course we held in this our perusall and survey of the Bible. Truely (good Christian Reader), we never thought from the beginning, that we should need to make a new Translation, nor yet to make of a bad one a good one, (for then the imputation of *Sixtus* had been true in some sort, that our people had been fed with gall of Dragons in stead of wine, with whey in stead of milk); but to make a good one better, or out of many good ones, one principal good one, not justly to be excepted against; that hath been our indeavour, that our mark. . . . Neither did we run over the work with that posting haste that the *Septuagint* did, if that be true which is reported of them, that they finished it in seventy-two dayes; neither were we barred or hindred from going over it again, having once done it, like Saint *Hierome*. . . . None of these things: the work hath not been hudled up in seventy two dayes, but hath cost the workmen, as light as it seemeth, the pains of twise seven times seventy-two dayes and more: matters of such weight and consequence are to be speeded with maturitie: for in a businesse of moment a man feareth not the blame of convenient slacknesse. Neither did we think much to consult the Translators or Commentators,

Chaldee, Hebrew, Syrian, Greek, or Latine, no nor the Spanish, French, Italian, or Dutch; neither did we disdain to revise that which we had done, and to bring back to the anvill that which we had hammered: but having and using as great helps as were needfull, and fearing no reproach for slowness nor coveting praise for expedition, we have at the length, through the good hand of the Lord upon us, brought the work to that passe that you see."

So much and no more of the worthy Bishop of Glouceſter. Indeed, as he says himself, he might have given the "gentle Reader" warning of many things more, "if we had not exceeded the measure of a Preface already," as he very certainly has. But in those days both sermons and prefaces were like the rocks which Homer's heroes hurled at one another,—of such bulk and weight that not ten men of our degenerate days could handle them; and a Preface, particularly, was not so much what we underſtand by such a word, as a supplementary treatise, where you fired off upon your antagoniſts all the ammunition which you had not been able to use in the main encounter. He lays his finger directly upon the failing of the Rheims and Douai translators—"we have shunned the obscuritie of the Papiſts, in their *Azymes*, *Tunike*, *Rationall*, *Holocauſts*, *Praepuce*, *Pasche*, and a number of such like, whereof their late translation is full, and that of purpose to darken the sense, that since they muſt needs translate the Bible, yet by the language thereof, it may be kept from being underſtood"; but he omits to acknowledge that, like sensible men, the translators had made use of the version which he criticises in points where they had found its rendering good. We are neither to blame him, nor to praise his opponent's foresight, for the fact that of the ſtrange words which he quotes from the Roman version, several have now attained at leaſt conditional admission to the usage of our language, for he might have adduced many more which have not done so.

But the chief intereſt of a very intereſting document is its direct evidence as to the ideals and methods of King James's



LUTHER (CENTRE) AND MELANCHTHON (LEFT) TRANSLATING THE BIBLE

From a painting by Labouchere.

The scene is a purely imaginary one; but the picture gives a good idea of the two great Reformers.

translators. He is most explicit on the point that what was done was not to make a new translation; but simply to revise and improve translations which already were good. This, it will be remembered, was definitely the object of the enterprise from the very beginning, and in the rules drawn up for the translators they were expressly instructed to consult, first the Bishops' Bible, and then Tyndale's, Matthew's, Coverdale's, Whitchurch's, and the Geneva version. Wisely they put a wide interpretation upon these instructions, and in addition to all the other foreign versions, Luther's, Beza's, and the rest, they consulted for the Old Testament at least two other quite recent Latin versions, those of Arias Montanus (1572), and of Tremellius (1579), while of new continental versions, they had also access to the authoritative French Bible of 1587–8, the Italian Version of J. Diodati (1607), and the Spanish Versions of Cassiodoro de Reyna (1569), and Cipriano de Valera (1602). In the New Testament their work consisted mainly of a careful revision of the text of the Bishops' Bible, in comparison with the Greek text, and with Beza's, the Geneva, and the Rhemish versions.

It was, of course, unfortunate for their work that the original manuscripts to which they had access were few, and of comparatively late date. The only manuscript of the great four which rank as of first-class importance, that we in England possess, is the Codex Alexandrinus, or Codex A; and it did not come to England until 1628, seventeen years after the Authorised Version had been published. In spite of this lack of early original sources,—a lack which they shared, of course, with the scholars of other lands at the time,—every paragraph of their work bears testimony "to the tact, care, diligence, and faithfulness of the men to whom, in God's providence, we owe the version of the Scriptures which has come down to us consecrated by the associations of three hundred years."

In one respect also, it does honour to the men who had worked at the same task before them, and to the sound

common sense of the revisers, who respected good work when they met it, and were not carried away by the desire to have everything fire-new of their own forging. Tyndale, Coverdale, and their fellow-labourers of the early and less happy days came to their own in the use which was made of their toils in the new version ; and the first man who gave his life to win for Englishmen the privilege of reading the Bible in their own language could scarcely have craved a nobler monument to his faithfulness and learning than the fact that so much of his was embodied in the great work which will in all probability remain the standard of such work as long as the English language endures.

It is interesting to take a single short passage, and trace the changes which the rendering has undergone from Tyndale's time to that of King James. Here, for instance, are verses 6–8 of the twelfth chapter of Romans, as they appear in the different translations. First, let us hear Tyndale : "Seyinge that we have divers gyftes accordynge to the grace that is geven vnto vs, yf eny man have the gyft off prophesy lett hym have it that itt be agreynge vnto the fayth. Let hym that hath an office, wayte on his office. Let hym that teacheth take hede to his doctryne. Let hym that exhorteth geve attendaunce to his exhortacion. Yf eny man geve, lett hym do it with singlenes. Let hym that rueleth do it with diligence. Yf eny man shewe mercy lett hym do itt with cherfulnes."

Here next, is Coverdale's rendering of the same passage : "And (we) haue dyuers giftes accordinge to the grace that is geuen vnto vs. Yf eny man haue the gifte of prophecienge let it be accordinge to the faith. Let him that hath an office wayte vpon the office, let him that teacheth take hede to the doctryne. Let him that exhorteth geue attendaunce to the exhortacion. Yf eny man geueth let him geue with synglenesse. Let him that ruleth be diligent. Yf eny man shewe mercy let him do it with chearfulnesse." There is little enough difference between the two ; but in Matthew's Bible we come back closer, as we might expect, to Tyndale's

phrasing: "Seynge that we haue diuers gyftes, accordynge to the grace that is geuen vnto vs. Yf anye man haue the gyfte of prophesye, let hym haue it that it be agreynge vnto faythe. Let hym that hathe an offyce, wayte on hys office. Let hym that teacheth take hede to hys doctryne. Let hym that exhorteth geue attendaunce to hys exhortacion. Yf any man geue let him do it with singlenes. Let hym that rueleth do it with diligence. Yf any man shew mercy, let him do it with cherfulnes."

The Great Bible differs very little from Matthew's: "Seynge that we haue dyuers gyftes accordynge to the grace that is geuen vnto vs yf any man haue the gyfte of prophecy let him haue it that it be agreing vnto the fayth. Let hym that hath an office wayte on hys office. Let hym that teacheth take hede to hys doctrine. Let hym that exhorteth geue attendaunce to his exhortacion. If any man geue, let hym do it wyth synglenes. Let hym that ruleth do it with diligence. If any man shewe mercy, let him do it with cherfulnes." The Geneva version begins to approximate to the rhythms that are so familiar to us: "Seeing then that we haue giftes that are diuers, according to the grace that is giuen vnto vs: whether we haue prophesie, let us prophesie according to the proportion of faith: Or an office let vs waite on the office: or hee that teacheth on teaching. Or he that exhorteth on exhortation: hee that distributeth let him do it with simplicitie: he that ruleth with diligence: hee that sheweth mercie with chearefulnes."

The phrasing of the Bishops' Bible differs somewhat, but the sense is identical: "Seeing that wee haue diuers giftes according to the grace that is giuen vnto vs, eyther prophecie, after the measure of fayth, Eyther office, in administration: or he that teacheth, in teaching. Or he that exhorteth, in exhorting: he that giueth in singlenesse, he that ruleth in diligence: hee that is mercyfull in chearefulnesse." The Rheims Testament, in the absence of any occasion to display its extraordinary vocabulary, comes close enough to the others to show their faithfulness, "their enemies themselves

being witnesses" : "And hauing giftes, according to the grace that is giuen vs, different, either prophecie according to the rule of faith, Or ministerie in ministring, or he that teacheth in doctrine. He that exhorteth in exhorting, he that giueth in simplicitie, he that ruleth in carefulnes, he that sheweth mercie in cheerefulnes."

Finally the Authorised Version gathers up the merits of all, taking somewhat from each, most perhaps from the Geneva, but owing "ministry" and "ministring" even to the Rheims, with a hint from the Bishops' : "Hauing then gifts, differing according to the grace that is giuen to vs, whether prophecie, let vs prophecie according to the proportion of faith. Or ministery, let vs wait on our ministring : or hee that teacheth on teaching. Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation : he that giueth let him doe it with simplicitie : hee that ruleth, with diligence : hee that sheweth mercy with cheerefulnesse." The variations which exist are such as to make no real difference to the meaning of the Apostle ; and no one who can understand what the Authorised Version tells him need have the slightest difficulty in gathering the same meaning from the words of Tyndale.

Turning to the Old Testament, let us look at two verses of that beautiful passage in which the prophet foresees the glories of the restored Jerusalem,—Isaiah LIV. 11, 12. Here we begin with Wycliffe, to trace our debt still further back. "Thou porelet, with tempest al to-pullid, with oute any coumfort, lo ! I shal araie by order thi stones, and founde thee in safires ; and I shal sette iasp thy pynacles and thi gates in to grauen stones, and alle thi termes in to desirable stones." Tyndale is lacking to us here, but Coverdale, in Matthew's Bible, may take his place : "Behold, thou poore, vexed and despised, I wil make thy walles of precious stones and thy foundacion of Saphires, Thy windowes off Cristall, thi gates of fyne cleare stones, and thy borders of pleasaunt stones." The Genevan gives us something foretelling the melody of the Jacobean version : "O thou afflicted and tossed with tempest, that hast no comfort, beholde, I wil lay thy

ſtones with the carbuncle and laye thy foundation with saphirs; And I will make thy windows of emeraudes, and thy gates shining ſtones, and all thy borders of pleasant ſtones."

The Bishops' Bible again approximates more to the earlier versions, and its tone drops somewhat from the majeſty which the Genevan had already attained. "Beholde thou poore vexed and despised, I will make thy walles of precious ſtones and thy foundation of Saphires. Thy windowes of Chriſtall, thy gates of fyne cleare ſtone, and all thy borders of pleasaunt ſtones." Finally we get the full diapason in the Authorised Version which has adopted the Geneva suggestion of the rich splendour of the Carbuncle, but has set it elsewhere, and has wrought the whole into a ſtrain of matchless music: "Oh thou, afflicted, tossed with tempeſt and not comforted, behold I will lay thy ſtones with faire colours, and lay thy foundations with Saphires. And I will make thy windowes of Agates, and thy gates of Carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant ſtones."

This inſtance of the adoption, with a difference, of a Genevan suggeſtion brings up the matter of the relation of the Authorised Version to this despised translation which the unveracious King James declared to be in his opinion the worſt of all translations. His translators evidently thought differently, as is clearly shown by analysis of specimen passages. Dr. Moulton has analysed the passage Isaiah LIV, 11–17, from which we have taken two verses for comparison. He finds that the whole passage contains 182 words, of which 86 are common to all the versions. The variable element, therefore, is 96 words, and in 60 inſtances the Authorised Version agrees with the Geneva Bible, while its agreement with the Bishops' Bible, which the translators were ordered to take as the foundation of their work, only amounts to twelve inſtances! In an analysis of Isaiah LIII, Dr. Weſtcott has shown that of the variations from the Bishops' Bible in the Authorised Version, about seven-eighths are due to the Geneva. The example, says Bishop Weſtcott,

" only represents on an exaggerated scale the general relation in which the Authorised Version stands to the Genevan and Bishops' Bibles in the Prophetical books."

All things considered, one of the most astonishing facts connected with the Version is the small amount of change which the scholars of King James found it necessary to make. The early translators had done their work and laid the foundations faithfully and soundly. Much of Tyndale and of Coverdale remains unchanged in the Bible which we read to-day, and even Wycliffe and Purvey have their share in the majestic fabric whose top-stone was brought out with shoutings in 1611. This is the distinction which makes the English Bible unique. The other great Continental translations bear the stamp each one of the individuality of a single man, and one German writer has scornfully remarked that it took English scholarship nearly a century to accomplish what Luther did for Germany in the fraction of a single lifetime. But, as Dr. Westcott has put it, " The reproach is exactly our glory."

Our Bible came to us as its great original grew up in the beginning, slowly and gradually, extending its influence and perfecting its form, as the nation wakened into the knowledge and appreciation of its great heritage of spiritual liberty. It came to us as all our best things have come; not by the gift of any single hand, but by the united labours of the representative men of the nation and of generations. In short, our Bible became the English Bible in the way that we have come to regard as most characteristically English—the way in which our constitution and our laws have grown up; not by violent changes in which each new stage is unrelated to what went before it, but by a slow process in which all that was good in earlier attempts was conserved, and handed down to future generations with whatever of improvement the time then present could make upon the fabric.

As astonishing as the testimony to the earlier versions which King James's version bears, is its own wonderful music.

Where did the Jacobean translators find the majestic movement, the dignity, the sense of rhythm, the instinct for exactly the right word which will not only express the meaning, but will complete the harmony of the passage, the cadences which linger upon the ear, and will never be forgotten as long as life lasts? It has already been pointed out that they were working precisely at the period when the English language was reaching the flood-mark of its achievement, and they were so far fortunate in this; but there is no conspicuous evidence that they were strongly influenced by this in other work. We have two notable instances of what they were capable of outside the limits of the sacred text, and neither of them suggests that they were the men to rise "to the height of this great argument."

The Epistle Dedicatorie represents them when they were upon their high horse; and with all respect to "Great and Manifold were the blessings, most dread sovereign," their high horse was not Pegasus. The thing has its own stilted rhythm and motion, and it certainly has the merit of being absolutely unforgettable; but that is all that you can say for it, even though you leave its flunkeyism out of account. At the other end of the scale you have Bishop Miles Smith's lengthy preface. It is a good, honest, pedestrian piece of work; but you will look in it in vain for any of the magic of the version which it introduces. How did men who could sink to the shameless flattery of the one ever attain the dignity that marks every page of their scriptural work; how did men who, when they were putting their best foot forward, achieved only the commonplace of the "Translators to the Reader," ever rise to the distinction and charm of style which is everywhere in their translation?

Some of the credit, probably much of it, must go, no doubt, to Tyndale and Coverdale. It would probably not be far from the mark to suggest that a great deal of the strength and dignity of the rendering is Tyndale's, and a great deal of the tenderness and melody of it Coverdale's. But this is not the whole story, and it does less than justice to the

Jacobean translators. They were dealing with work which was not their own, but had manifestly upon it the stamp of a greatness more than human. In the presence of Divine truth, it is not fanciful to believe, these devout and learned men found a new power, not their own, inspiring them, chastening their extravagances, purging their smallnesses, and bringing them into harmony with their great themes. There is evidence on almost every page of the extreme care with which they sought for not only *a* word which would express their meaning adequately, but *the* word which would express it as none other could. They sought to give none but their best to God; and the effort was honoured and accepted.

The testimonies that have been paid to the merits of the version are countless. This chapter may well close with two of them, both from hostile sources. "If accuracy and strictest attention to the letter of the text be supposed to constitute an excellent version," writes a Roman Catholic divine of the late eighteenth century, "this is of all versions the most excellent." Father Faber comes nearer to our own day, and as a master of melodious, though somewhat anæmic verse, has a right to be heard on questions of style and melody. "Who will say," he writes, "that the uncommon beauty and marvellous English of the Protestant Bible is not one of the great strongholds of heresy in this country? It lives on the ear like a music that can never be forgotten, like the sound of church bells, which the convert scarcely knows how he can forgo. Its felicities seem often to be almost things rather than words. It is part of the national mind, and the anchor of the national seriousness. Nay, it is worshipped with a positive idolatry, in extenuation of whose fanaticism its intrinsic beauty pleads availingly with the scholar. The memory of the dead passes into it. The potent traditions of childhood are stereotyped in its verses. It is the representative of a man's best moments; all that there has been about him of soft, and gentle, and pure, and penitent, and good speaks to him forever out of his English

Bible. It is his sacred thing, which doubt never dimmed and controversy never soiled; and in the length and breadth of the land there is not a Protestant with one spark of religiousness about him whose spiritual biography is not in his Saxon Bible."

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

The Later History; Revision and New Versions

THE history of the English Bible, subsequent to the great revision of 1611, may be compared to the tranquil progress of a river through the lower plains amidst which it makes its later stages towards the sea. Up among the hills where it had its birth, the course of the river was perplexed and harassed by countless obstacles. The rush of the torrent, and the foaming rapids which marked its course, bore witness to the difficulties which it had to meet as it fought its way, in obedience to the great law of its nature, towards that broad fulfilment of its destiny in which it could prove of service to man. The hills once left behind, the struggling and stormy period of its being is past; and though there still may remain long bends which seem to turn it away from its aim, and sluggish reaches where its waters scarcely seem to move at all, its general story is one of calm usefulness, and gradual and undisturbed progress towards its goal.

So it has been with our Bible. It had its times of stress and strain where endless difficulties hindered its advance, and where, just as the forces of nature seem to bar the way of the river, so the powers of this world seemed to forbid the progress of God's Word. The days of Wycliffe, of Tyndale, Coverdale, and Cranmer, were the days of toil, danger, and uncertainty, when the Bible seemed to be struggling for its very right to existence in England; days, too, that like the mountain reaches of the river, are full of variety and picturesque beauty. These are the days which to no small

extent give to our Bible what might be called its external claim upon our interest and affection. It is fitting that Bishop Westcott should remind us of this (now so often forgotten or made light of) in the beautiful words with which he concludes his History of the English Bible.

"But the English Bible," he says, "has what the Latin Bible, as far as we know, had not. It has not only the prerogative of vitality while the other has been definitely fixed in one shape, but it has also the seal of martyrdom upon it. In this, too, it differs from the other great modern versions. Luther defied his enemies to the last. Lefevre, in extreme old age, mourned that when the opportunity was given him he had not been found worthy to give up his life for Christ. Calvin died sovereign at Geneva. But Tindale, who gave us our first New Testament from the Greek, was strangled for his work at Vilvorde: Coverdale, who gave us our first printed Bible, narrowly escaped the stake by exile: Rogers, to whom we owe the multiform basis of our present Version, was the first victim of the Marian persecution: Cranmer, who has left us our Psalter, was at last blessed with a death of triumphant agony.

The work was crowned by martyrdom and the workmen laboured at it in the faith and with the love of martyrs. The solemn words in which they commend the Bible to their readers, the prayers which they offer for the spiritual enlightenment of their countrymen, the confessions which they make of their own insufficiency, have even now lost nothing of their eloquence. These are the moral of the story." Words such as these, coming from the pen of one of the greatest scholars whom the English Church has produced in our time, ought to be remembered in days when every effort is being put forth to draw the people of our land back into the bondage from which the truth made them free, and when, with peculiar meanness, the characters and motives of the great protagonists of the cause of a free Bible are being industriously maligned and aspersed.

But with the Version of 1611, the story of the Bible flows

out, so to speak, into the plain. There were, indeed, days of sore trouble ahead for the nation and the Church of England, and days of equally sore trouble ahead for the sister northern land, while the Church in Scotland had to pass through a time of trial to which the English Church offers no parallel; but all the same the battle for an open Bible was already won, and in neither land did either party to the furious strifes which raged during the seventeenth century attempt to go back to the old obscurantist position and deny the laity the right of access to the Word of God. The Bible had become the book of the race, sacred to both sides in all their controversies, and growing more and more deeply beloved through its ministrations to the needs of human spirits in the time of fiery trial. From 1611 onwards, the river has no longer the romantic interest of the rapids, eddies, and cataracts which marked its struggles among the hills; and it flows placidly, enough, sometimes almost too placidly, yet always accomplishing its great mission to man.

It was by no means all at once that the version of King James won its way into favour. There was no question, of course, as to its triumph over the Bishops' Bible, to which it was in every way superior; and the Bishops' Bible soon ceased to be published and became a relic of the past. But it was different with the Geneva Bible. The merits of the latter were many and obvious. As we have seen, its renderings were so generally adopted by King James's translators as to show that its quality was exceptionally high; while its uncompromising Calvinism endeared it to the large and important Puritan section of opinion in England. In Scotland, of course, it was assured of a welcome by reason not only of its own intrinsic qualities, but because it had come from the Holy of Holies of Calvinism, the *alma Mater* of John Knox. Accordingly we find that even as late as the time of the Civil War, the Geneva Bible was still popular in England, while in Scotland its time of favour lasted still longer.

Even scholars were not unanimous at first in favour of the

new Version. "Tell His Majesty," wrote Hugh Broughton, who was probably the most competent Hebraist of his time in England, "that I had rather be rent in pieces with wild horses than any such translation, by my consent, should be urged on poor churches." Poor Archbishop Bancroft, whom we have seen the diligent, but by no means willing, agent of the King's pleasure in the matter, was told by Dr. Broughton that his final lot would be anywhere rather than in heaven, because of his share in such a business! But Broughton was merely indulging in a fit of spleen which is not unintelligible when we remember that he was known to be a man of such ungovernable temper that he had been deliberately left out of the company of translators, in spite of his known skill, because nobody would or could work with him. In 1653, the Long Parliament, dissatisfied with a Stuart Bible, which was alleged to be disfigured by many misprints (as was true), and which spoke "the prelatical language," appointed a committee of learned men to consult about a new revision. Much hard work was accomplished by them; but the dissolution of the Parliament brought their labours to an end before they had advanced to a stage where they could be laid before the public. With the Restoration came a revision of the Book of Common Prayer (1662). This revised Prayer-Book in a measure sealed the triumph of the Authorised Version, for while the Psalter of the Great Bible (Coverdale's rendering) was left unchanged, the Epistles and Gospels, with all the longer portions of Scripture for occasional services, were taken from the version of 1611.

From that time until the great revision of the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the course of the Authorised Version may be said to have been uninterrupted. It had finally established itself as superior to any of its rivals; it was gradually rooting itself in the affections, as well as in the respect, of the whole nation, as its beautiful music was continually heard in association with all the most sacred moments of life; at last its supremacy became practically

unquestioned. Not that there were not new translations put forward. In the eighteenth century, for instance, as at the present day, there were occasional complaints that the language of the 1611 version was obscure, archaic, or lacking in dignity, and attempts were made to offer a new version which should give to the readers of the Rambler something more in accordance with the taste of the time than was offered by what they would have called the "Gothick and Barbarous taste" of the Jacobean age. One of these deserves to be rescued for a moment from oblivion, as being a thing quite unique and absolutely priceless in its kind. This is Dr. E. Harwood's *Liberal New Testament*, or as he describes it himself on the title-page of his two volumes, issued in 1768—"A LIBERAL TRANSLATION of the NEW TESTAMENT; Being An Attempt to translate the SACRED WRITINGS with the same Freedom, Spirit, and Elegance, With which other English Translations from the Greek Classics have lately been executed."

The word Elegance in Dr. Harwood's title ought to be observed, for it is the key-note of his whole rendering, and he does his best all through to live up to the standard which he has set for himself. Justice could only be done to his performance by large quotation; but as this is impossible, a little must suffice, where much would, no doubt, be desired by the enchanted reader. Here, then, are verses 6 and 7 of Matthew XIV, describing the dancing of Salome at Herod's feast. "While John was under confinement, it happened that Herod celebrated his birth day with great pomp and magnificence—on which occasion the daughter of Herodias danced before the company with such inimitable grace and elegance, as filled Herod with ecstacies of rapture. So that he was transported into such extravagancies, as to promise by the most solemn adjuration, before the whole assembly—that what she should ask of him, he would give her, whatever it should be." Poor Matthew! How rustic and commonplace he seems beside the elegance of this rendering, which is as remarkable as that of Salome's dancing. "Bless thee,

Bottom," says Quince, the carpenter, "Bless thee! thou art translated."

Lest it should be thought that we have chosen an unusually favourable specimen of Dr. Harwood's elegance, let us hear him in another famous passage, where Luke describes the beginning of the adventure of the Prodigal Son. "A Gentleman of a splendid family and opulent fortune had two sons. One day the younger approached his father, and begged him in the most importunate and soothing terms to make a partition of his effects between himself and his brother—The indulgent father, overcome by his blandishments, immediately divided all his fortunes betwixt them." Unfortunately the rendering of the Lord's Prayer is too lengthy to be quoted in full, but a single verse will sufficiently exhibit the enormous advance from the brief rusticity of Jesus to the elegant extension of Dr. Harwood. (Matthew VI. 9.) "In order to guard you from mistakes in this important concern I will propose the following as a model for your devotions—O Thou great governour and parent of universal nature—who manifestest thy glory to the blessed inhabitants of heaven—may all thy rational creatures in all the parts of thy boundless dominion be happy in the knowledge of thy existence and providence, and celebrate thy perfections in a manner most worthy thy nature and perfective of their own!" This is indeed what Mrs. Malaprop might call "a nice derangement of epitaphs"; and Jesus only said: "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name"! How much may be made out of how little!

Now one can imagine hearers like Miss Anna Seward, the Swan of Lichfield, listening enraptured to the round and melodious, and above all "elegant" periods of Dr. Harwood; but present-day taste will probably say with perfect unanimity —"This will never do!" And here is precisely the point for which Dr. Harwood's efforts have been quoted. The last thing in the world that one would dream of would be

to equate him with the scholars of our own day who, single-handed like him, have endeavoured to give a present-day rendering of Scripture for present-day readers. And yet—an uneasy suspicion will insinuate itself like a serpent into the Eden of our versions in modern speech. Our modern translators represent the best scholarship, and possibly, though not so certainly, the best taste of the day. But so did Dr. Harwood represent that of the eighteenth century—certainly the taste, and doubtless the scholarship also. Yet he has become a mere derision to our time, and what is to guarantee us that the same fate may not overtake as well-meant and industrious effort hereafter? Where is the thing to end?

Quaintly enough, one seems to hear a whisper once more from Bishop Bancroft—"If euery man's humour should be followed, there woulde be no ende of translating";—and, still more quaintly, one seems to sympathise with him, in this respect, if in nothing else—that the translating of the Word of God is too big and important a task to be left to individual industry now, however much we owe to the individual translator in the past. Not only religion, but our language requires to be protected, for our taste in speech is subject now, as it has been in the past, to strange lapses; and it is not fitting that the book which enshrines all that is most sacred should be subject to all the motley transformations of current slang and invading Americanisms. Dr. Harwood stands as an awful example of what such a thing may mean. Let us take warning in time.

Apart from such vagaries as those of Dr. Harwood, the eighteenth century witnessed a once famous controversy as to the English Bible which is worth mentioning because it brought into the fight a critic whose name is well-known in the Classical field, but whose services to the cause of Biblical criticism are not sufficiently remembered. The publication of Bryan Walton's *Polyglot* with its collection of various readings had made something of a sensation in the seventeenth century; and when this was followed, in 1707, by

Dr. John Mill's edition of the New Testament, with its thirty thousand various readings, there was a triumphant shout from Anthony Collins, the Deist, who in his *Discourse of Free Thinking*, treated this mass of variants as proving his positions. The chief merit of Collins's work was that it drew an answer from the greatest scholar of the age, Richard Bentley, who dealt with the cavils raised by Collins in a manner absolutely conclusive. Bentley's words, written in 1713, are still worth quoting for the clear common sense with which they state the position.

"The real text of the sacred writers does not lie in any manuscript or edition, but is dispersed in them all—'Tis competently exact in the worst MS. now extant, nor is one article of faith or moral precept either perverted or lost in them, choose as awkwardly as you will. . . . Make your 30,000 variations as many more . . . even put them into the hands of a knave or a fool, and yet with the most sinistrous or absurd choice he shall not so disguise Christianity but that every feature of it will still be the same." Bentley was really the first to suggest methods for the recovery of the earliest possible text of the New Testament, such as have been followed since his time by the modern school of textual critics, who have succeeded in giving to us a text far exceeding in purity that used by Erasmus or Beza.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, however, the desire for a revision of the Authorised Version, so as to bring it into line with the scholarship of the day, began to declare itself. On the one hand our knowledge of early manuscripts was rapidly increasing, so that instead of being dependent, like Erasmus, on comparatively late codices, such ancient manuscripts as the Codex Alexandrinus (fifth century), and Codex Ephraem (fifth century), were available; while Tischendorf's great discovery of Codex Sinaiticus was made in 1844, and Codex Vaticanus, though most jealously guarded, was soon to be facsimiled by order of Pius IX, and had already been to some extent collated by scholars like Tregelles. The gradual publication, between 1857 and 1861,

of a *Revision of the Gospel of St. John, by Five Clergymen* excited considerable interest. The five were Bishops Ellicott and Moberly, Dean Alford, Dr. Barrow, and Mr. Humphry, and they followed up their first work by a revision of the Pauline Epistles; while in 1869 Dean Alford published a complete revision of the New Testament. It was manifestly time to endeavour to make use, not only of the extraordinary development of knowledge as to the ancient manuscripts of Scripture, but also of the increased acquaintance with the usages and the fine shades of distinction in meaning of the Hebrew and Greek languages which had grown up since the completion of King James's version.

Accordingly, in February 1870, both Houses of the Convocation of Canterbury resolved upon the appointment of a Committee to confer with a Committee of the Province of York, as to the desirableness of a revision of the Authorised Version. Revision was finally determined upon, and in due course the company of revisers was appointed. The Authorised Version had been the work of scholars of the Church of England alone, though both the Puritan and the anti-Puritan schools within the Church had been represented; but for the work of revision it was wisely decided to call in the help of scholars of the Nonconformist Churches in England and the three great Presbyterian Churches in Scotland. During the two hundred and sixty years that had passed since the completion of King James's version, another great English-speaking nation had grown up on the other side of the Atlantic, and its claim to a share in the work was recognised by the appointment of an American company of revisers, with which the British revisers were in constant communication.

There is no need to tell at length the story of the revision, which is admirably recounted in the prefaces to the Revised Version. The revising companies were representative of the best scholarship of all branches of the English-speaking Church, both here and in America, and they did all in their power to make their work as perfect as possible. The

scholars of King James's day counted it no small thing that they took two years and nine months for its completion—"the paines of twise seven times seventy-two dayes and more"—i.e. 1008 days; but the Old Testament company of revisers took fourteen years to their task, during which time they sat for 792 days, and the New Testament company, though their task was completed almost four years sooner, took proportionately longer to it, as they needed 407 meetings to revise 194 pages, as against the other company's 792 meetings for 678 pages. Thus the whole Bible occupied the revisers for 1199 sessions, as against the 1008 of their predecessors; and the preparatory work, apart from the actual sessions, was carried out during a much longer period. It is plain that the revisers spared neither pains nor labour on their great task.

The Revised New Testament was issued on the 17th May, 1881, and was received with most extraordinary interest. The work was published by the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and at Oxford alone the orders received before publication amounted to over a million copies, while within a few days two million copies were issued—this in addition to the numbers at Cambridge, and the editions simultaneously issued in the United States. The publication of the Old Testament did not take place until May 19, 1885, and perhaps suffered a little in comparison, as to the interest excited, by the previous appearance of the New Testament.

The verdict of contemporary opinion on the gigantic work of the revisers was curiously diversified. On the one hand it was warmly welcomed, on the other it was as warmly condemned. On the whole, opinion was more gentle in its dealing with the Old Testament revision than with the New, for the simple reason that the Old Testament revisers had dealt much more gently with the text than their brethren of the New Testament company, who, however, it should be remembered, had a much more difficult task, as the amount of new material with which they had to deal in the shape of new discovery of ancient sources was far greater.

On the whole, judgment settled to a somewhat adverse view; not on account of the actual changes made, or on any question of scholarship, but owing to the somewhat drastic modifications of style which the revisers had so largely introduced. It must be admitted that the Revised New Testament compares very unfavourably, as a piece of English, with the Authorised; nor does the experience of the Old Testament revisers suggest that it was necessary to modify the style of the sacred books in such drastic fashion.

We now stand at a sufficient distance from the publication of both revisions to be able to see more or less clearly what the ultimate issue of matters is likely to be, as regards the general use of the Authorised Version and that of the Revised. It has to be considered that the Authorised Version itself was once the Revised Version of its time, and took a considerable time to win its way to favour; but, even so, the Revised Version has now been practically forty-five years before our people, and that in a time when things move with much greater rapidity than three centuries ago; yet the new Version shows as little sign to-day of superseding the Authorised in use, as it did on the day of its publication—indeed it shows less. It would probably be within the mark to say that the older version is sold and used fifty times for once that the newer one is, and there is no sign that the gap is being closed.

How far this is due to the drastic interpretation which the New Testament revisers put upon their instructions and the thirty-six thousand changes which they deemed it necessary to make, and how far to the unfortunate lack of the sense of rhythm and music which seems to have characterised them, is hard to say; but the fact is unquestionable. So far as use goes, it seems likely that the question is settled, and that the older version has definitely triumphed. Yet this is not in the least to say that the revision has been useless. It will always have its uses, as the interpreter of the obscurities of the more ancient version, and as, in many instances, the best possible commentary upon it. "The least that can be

said of it," said Dean Bickersteth, in the heat of the criticism of the revision, "is that it is confessedly one of the best Commentaries on the New Testament, and a most important contribution towards a new Version."

But already, in its turn, the Revised Version is, in a sense, going out of date. During the last thirty years discoveries have been multiplying which bear very distinctly upon questions of Biblical criticism. The papyrus sites in Egypt have yielded fragments of manuscripts of our existing Gospels and of lost Gospels which are considerably older than any manuscript that was available to the revisers. We have learned that New Testament Greek, which used to be looked upon as a thing by itself, is, indeed, no such thing, but simply the *koiné*, the language of common speech which was universally used at the time when the New Testament was written. It is inevitable that attempts should be made to bring before the reading public all the results of the new work which is being brought to bear upon the Word of God. New versions are being produced, and will continue to be produced. Of these, some are merely concessions to the modern disinclination to take the trouble to understand anything that is not expressed in modern jargon. These will, no doubt, speedily share the fate of Dr. Harwood's attempt to import "elegance" into Holy Scripture. Others again, like the extraordinarily able single-handed work of Dr. Moffatt, will remain useful in the same sense in which the Revised Version has been useful in the past—as interpreters and helps to the understanding of the Authorised Version where it is obscure. But it seems extremely improbable that even the best of these will ever do anything to take the place of the work of King James's scholars; and certainly few can hear any modern version read as a substitute for the Authorised Version in public worship without feeling their teeth set on edge.

It is rash to prophesy; but it seems safe to say that there appears to be little likelihood of a new revision being undertaken for a long time on anything like the scale of the great

revision of the late nineteenth century. One result of the latter, to which perhaps sufficient attention has not been paid, was to show, in spite of the drastic work of the New Testament company, how unimportant the total amount of change really was. Of all the changes introduced by the revisers there is not one, either in the Old Testament or the New, which affects a single point of fundamental belief; while by far the greater number of changes only deal with points of minute detail. It is important to realise that on all points which concern the essentials of belief the Bible as we have it in the Authorised Version is absolutely to be depended on for the faithfulness of its rendering. Indeed, it seems probable that the Authorised Version will always remain "The People's Bible," though all the resources of modern scholarship will be increasingly employed to explain obsolete forms, to correct unimportant mistranslations, and to make obscurities clear.

One word remains to be said. We have seen that the Bible is a living book in this sense that we are constantly getting nearer and nearer to its original form, as we get further and further away in time from the period of its origin. This is a process which will steadily continue, though the results will doubtless be of minor and gradually diminishing importance in this respect. But it would also be true to say that in another sense the Bible was never so much a living book to any age as it is to our own. For the labours of modern scholarship have taught us to view it, not as a finished product, sent complete into the world at a certain time, and unrelated to and unaffected by its place and environment; but as the living growth of a score of successive periods, its form largely determined by the conditions of its time and place, illustrating the history of the past, and equally illustrated by it—a living Word, spoken to living men of its own time, but with an abiding significance for all time, as all truth must have. The amazing thing is that a book thus delivered, "at sundry times, and in divers portions," to an alien race, should have a living message to our race in all its periods as it has

at present, and that after so many centuries of adaptation and re-adaptation to the changing genius of our language, it should still hold the place which it does, and should obviously contain within itself living principles which, if obeyed and acted upon, hold in themselves the solution of our most modern social problems.

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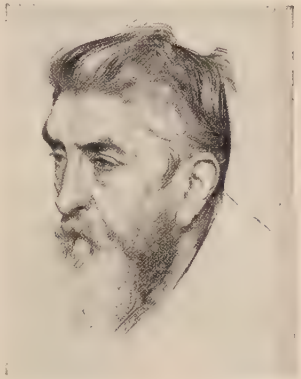

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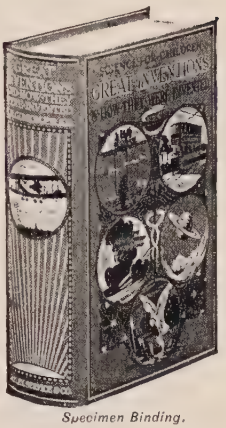

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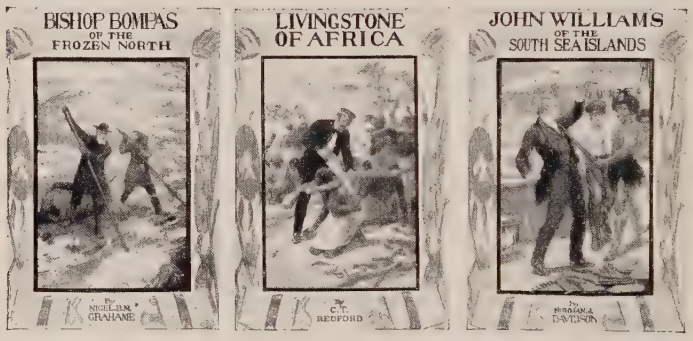

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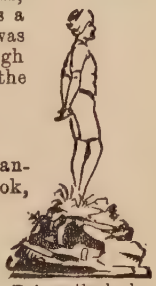

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